STRANGE

# TALES from the CRYPT

AN ENTERTAINING EC COMIC

NO. 20

OCT.-NOV.

10¢

NO...NO... IT *CAN'T* BE! THAT *NAME* HE'S CUTTING ON THE GRAVESTONE... THAT'S *MY* NAME! *AND MY DATE OF BIRTH!* BUT THE *DATE OF DEATH*... THAT'S *TODAY!*

UNIQUE STONECUTTING GRAVESTONES

ALEX KORDOVA PROP.

HERE LIES THEODORE J. WARREN BORN APRIL 25, 1922 DIED JUNE 9, 1950

IN MEMORY OF

JOHNNY CRAIG

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AUTHORIZED A. C. M. P.

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# THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S TALE

WELL...HEH, HEH...I SEE IT'S TIME FOR ME TO TELL YOU ANOTHER *SPINE-TINGLING* TALE...ONE OF MY VAST COLLECTION OF *CHILLERS* WHICH I KEEP HERE IN THE *CRYPT!* THIS STORY IS A FAVORITE OF MINE...ONE THAT I GUARANTEE WILL MAKE YOUR BLOOD RUN COLD AND YOUR HAIR STAND ON END! I CALL IT...

## THE THING FROM THE SEA!

*YOU* ARE ABOUT TO BEGIN A *FRIGHTFUL* ADVENTURE...CONCERNING A LUXURIOUS OCEAN LINER AND THE STRANGE AND UNEXPLAINED EVENTS THAT WILL OCCUR IN...

STATEROOM 13!

ELDSTEIN

YOU ARE ON A CROWDED PIER IN NEW YORK TRYING TO SECURE PASSAGE ON THE "OCEAN QUEEN," BOUND FOR ENGLAND! THE TRIP IS URGENT, AND YOU ARE PLEADING WITH THE PURSER...

BUT YOU MUST HAVE *ONE* BERTH OPEN... I'LL TAKE *ANY* CLASS!

WELL, AS A MATTER OF FACT, SIR... THAT IS... IF YOU'RE NOT *SUPERSTITIOUS*...

WHAT WONDERFUL LUCK! ONLY *ONE* OF THE TWO BERTHS IN STATEROOM 13 HAS BEEN TAKEN! YOU PAY THE PURSER AND BOARD THE SHIP! AND NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON...FOR AS YOU REACH THE TOP OF THE GANGPLANK...

*CAST OFF THE FORWARD LINES...*

*MAKE READY FOR DEPARTURE...*

LAST CALL... ALL ASHORE THAT'S GOING ASHORE...

YOU WATCH AS THE DOCK SLIPS AWAY...THE LITTLE TUGS STRAINING AND PUSHING THE GIANT LINER OUT INTO MIDSTREAM! THEN...

MAY I TAKE YOUR BAGS AND SHOW YOU TO YOUR CABIN, SIR?

WHY...THANK YOU, STEWARD!

AH...WHAT NUMBER STATEROOM DO YOU HAVE, SIR?

WHY... 13!

THE COLOR DRAINS FROM THE STEWARD'S CHEEKS... HIS EYES FILL WITH HORROR AS HE STARES AT YOU...

WHY...WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE TROUBLE STEWARD?

OH...ER... NOTHING, SIR... NOTHING!

THE STEWARD SETS YOUR BAGS DOWN IN YOUR STATEROOM, CHECKS THE PORTHOLE TO SEE THAT IT IS SECURELY BOLTED, AND THEN EDGES TOWARD THE DOOR! THERE IS A LOOK OF FEAR ON HIS FACE...

WHAT IS IT, OLD MAN? WHAT IS THERE ABOUT THIS CABIN THAT FRIGHTENS YOU?

I... I...DON'T KNOW, ONLY... ONLY...

NO ONE WHO HAS EVER BEEN ASSIGNED *THIS* CABIN HAS *COMPLETED* HIS CROSSING IN IT! *SOMETHING...SOMEONE...* *FRIGHTENS THEM* INTO *LEAVING IT!* WHY ONE PASSENGER EVEN WENT *MAD* FROM WHAT HE SAW HERE...

*WHA...?* WHAT *DID* THEY SEE? *TELL ME!*

THE STEWARD MUMBLES SOMETHING ABOUT GHOSTS AND SLIPS FROM YOUR GRASP! YOU WATCH AS HE HURRIES DOWN THE CORRIDOR, AND THEN YOU CLOSE THE DOOR...
GHOSTS... BAH! HE'S PROBABLY PLAYING A TRICK ON ME... SUGGESTION AND STUFF...
YOU STOW YOUR BELONGINGS IN YOUR ASSIGNED BERTH AND SURVEY THE CABIN! IT IS SMALL, WITH ONE PORTHOLE... AND THE TWO BERTHS...
HMMM! I WONDER WHO HAS THE UPPER? HIS BAGGAGE IS HERE! HE'S PROBABLY UP ON DECK SAYING GOODBYE TO THE GOOD OLD U. S. A.!
AFTER DINNER YOU DECIDE TO TURN IN! YOU ARE TIRED, AND THE FRESH SEA AIR HAS MADE YOU SLEEPY...
OH... HELLO! I GUESS YOU MUST BE MY ROOMMATE! GLAD TO MEET YOU!
SAME HERE! RATHER SMALL STATEROOM, ISN'T IT? HAD TO TAKE IT... ONLY ONE LEFT!
YES... THAT'S WHAT THEY TOLD ME! WELL... GUESS I'LL TURN IN! I'M PRETTY TIRED!
ME, TOO! GLAD YOU'RE HERE, THOUGH! THE STEWARD TOLD ME SOME AWFUL YARN ABOUT THIS ROOM...
OH, I WOULDN'T TAKE IT SERIOUSLY! HE'S PROBABLY PULLING YOUR LEG!
YES... WELL... GOOD-NIGHT!
YOU DON'T KNOW HOW LONG YOU'VE BEEN ASLEEP... ONLY... SUDDENLY YOUR EYES ARE OPEN! YOUR STATEROOM SMELLS STRANGE! THE PECULIAR SMELL OF DAMPNESS... STALE SEA-WATER! AND YOU ARE COLD... A GUSH OF AIR IS COMING FROM THE OPEN PORTHOLE...
BLAST! THE PORTHOLE IS OPEN! I'D BETTER CLOSE IT... OR RISK A NASTY COLD!
YOU GET UP AND STUMBLE TO THE PORTHOLE IN THE DARKNESS! THE BOLTS HAVE BEEN LOOSENED AND THE FINE SPRAY FROM THE SEA WETS YOUR FACE! YOU SLAM IT SHUT, BOLTING IT TIGHTLY... AND THEN, FROM THE BERTH ABOVE YOURS, COMES A BLOOD-CURDLING CRY...
WHAT THE...?
A-A-H-H!
3

WITH A SINGLE LEAP, YOUR ROOMMATE SPRINGS FROM HIS BERTH TO THE FLOOR AND DASHES MADLY TOWARD THE STATEROOM DOOR...

WHAT *IS* IT? *WHAT'S WRONG!*

*NO! NO! NO!*

YOU LISTEN TO HIS FOOTSTEPS RUNNING FULL SPEED DOWN THE CORRIDOR! POOR OLD BOY! PROBABLY SEA-SICK! YOU SHUT THE DOOR AND GROPE YOUR WAY BACK TO YOUR BERTH! YOUR EYES CLOSE AND YOU SLEEP AGAIN! THEN, DURING THE EARLY MORNING HOURS, YOU ARE AWAKENED BY A GROAN...

O-O-O-O-OH!

HMMMM! NOT A VERY GOOD SAILOR... POOR CHAP! LISTEN TO HIM MOAN...

THE NEXT MORNING, THE SUN STREAMING THROUGH THE PORT-HOLE AWAKENS YOU AND YOU DRESS QUICKLY! THE CURTAINS OF THE UPPER BERTH ARE DRAWN... YOU LEAVE WITHOUT DISTURBING YOUR ROOMMATE...

...PROBABLY ISN'T IN THE MOOD FOR BREAKFAST ANYWAY!

ON DECK, THE SHIP'S DOCTOR STOPS YOU...

I...I WONDER IF YOU CAN TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED LAST NIGHT? WE FOUND YOUR ROOMMATE COWERING IN A PASSAGE... BABBLING LIKE AN IDIOT!

WHA...? YOU MEAN... HE DIDN'T COME BACK TO THE STATEROOM?

NO! WE HAVE HIM IN THE SHIP'S HOSPITAL! HE'S SUFFERING FROM SHOCK! CAN YOU TELL ME WHAT HE SAW THAT MIGHT HAVE CAUSED IT?

I...I HAVE NO IDEA!

LOOK! I HAVE A LARGE CABIN! WHY DON'T YOU BRING YOUR THINGS OVER THERE AND SPEND THE REST OF YOUR TRIP WITH ME!

OH, REALLY, DOCTOR! ARE YOU INFERING THAT THE RUMORS ABOUT STATEROOM 13 ARE *TRUE?*

YOU LAUGH, REFUSING THE DOCTOR'S INVITATION! YOU SPEND THE DAY RELAXING IN YOUR DECK-CHAIR... SWIMMING IN THE SHIP'S POOL... AND PLAYING CANASTA IN THE GAME ROOM AFTER DINNER! IT IS VERY LATE WHEN YOU RETURN TO YOUR ROOM...

HO-HUM! GAD, I'M TIRED! THAT BERTH CERTAINLY LOOKS INVITING!

YOU CHECK THE PORTHOLE TO SEE THAT IT IS SECURELY BOLTED AND THEN YOU STRETCH OUT ON YOUR BERTH! YOU LAY AWAKE THINKING ABOUT THE AGONIZING SCREAM OF YOUR ROOMMATE THE NIGHT BEFORE, WHEN...

WHAT THE...? THE PORTHOLE IS OPEN AGAIN...AND...PHEW...THAT SMELL OF SEA-WATER AND DECAY...

YOU GET UP AND CLOSE IT! YOU ARE FRIGHTENED! YOU DISTINCTLY REMEMBER CHECKING IT BEFORE YOU WENT TO BED! YOU TIGHTEN THE BOLTS WITH ALL OF YOUR STRENGTH AND STAND THERE FOR A WHILE...STARING OUT TO SEA! SUDDENLY...

WHAT'S THAT? A MOAN... COMING FROM THE UPPER BERTH...

O-O-O-O-O-H!

YOU SPRING TO THE BERTH AND TEAR THE CURTAINS APART...THRUSTING YOUR HAND IN, TO DISCOVER IF THERE IS ANYONE THERE...

THAT SMELL...THAT NAUSEATING SMELL OF STAGNANT SALT-WATER! AND... AND... *AAAAAAGH!*

YOU TAKE HOLD OF SOMETHING...SOMETHING COLD AND WET...ICY COLD...SOMETHING LIKE A MAN'S ARM! AND AS YOU PULL, THE CREATURE HURLS ITSELF FROM THE BERTH...A CLAMMY, OOZY MASS!

*KEEP AWAY! KEEP AWAY!*

IN AN INSTANT, THE HORRIBLE MONSTROSITY HAS DARTED OUT OF THE STATEROOM DOOR!

*GOOD LORD!* SO *THAT'S* WHAT IT IS! I...I'LL ...FOLLOW IT!

YOU CHASE THE DARK SHADOW THROUGH THE DIMLY LIT PASSAGE, AND UP TO THE COMPANIONWAY!

BLASTED *THING!* IT'S GETTING AWAY!

YOU WATCH AS IT SEEMS TO GO OVER THE RAIL AND INTO THE SEA...

I...MUST BE DREAMING! THAT CURSED MEAL TONIGHT...IT... IT DIDN'T AGREE WITH ME!

YOU CANNOT RETURN TO THAT HORRIBLE ROOM SO YOU WALK THE DECK, FINALLY CURLING UP IN A DECK CHAIR UNDER A STEAMER BLANKET TO SLEEP A DREAMLESS SLEEP! THE MORNING SUN BLINDS YOU AS YOU ARE SHAKEN AWAKE...

OH... IT... IT IS YOU, CAPTAIN!

I WENT TO YOUR STATEROOM! YOU WEREN'T THERE! IS ANYTHING WRONG?

WELL FRANKLY, CAPTAIN, THERE *IS!* SOMETHING VERY HORRIBLE HAPPENED IN MY STATEROOM LAST NIGHT! IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN MY IMAGINATION BUT...

WHY DON'T YOU LET ME FIX YOU UP IN THE OFFICERS' QUARTERS FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE TRIP?

LOOK HERE CAPTAIN! CAN'T WE GET TO TO THE BOTTOM OF THIS? THERE *MUST* BE A LOGICAL EXPLANATION!

YOU ARE RIGHT, SIR! ONLY, WHAT CAN *I* DO? I'M INCLINED TO *BOARD UP* THE ROOM!

THAT WILL SOLVE NOTHING! PERHAPS IT IS ONLY A STOWAWAY... TRYING TO FRIGHTEN PEOPLE OUT OF THAT STATEROOM SO THAT HE CAN SPEND THE REMAINDER OF THE TRIP IN COMFORT! A MANIAC PERHAPS!

HMMM! THAT THOUGHT HAS NEVER OCCURED TO ME! YOU MAY BE RIGHT! I TELL YOU WHAT!

TONIGHT, I WILL STAND WATCH WITH YOU! IF HE SHOWS HIS FACE, WE'LL BE ABLE TO OVERPOWER HIM... TOGETHER!

*GOOD*, CAPTAIN! I'M GLAD *YOU* ARE TAKING A MORE REALISTIC ATTITUDE THAN YOUR SUPERSTITIOUS CREW!

YOU ARE RELIEVED THAT YOU WILL NOT HAVE TO SPEND ANOTHER NIGHT *ALONE* IN THAT ACCURSED STATEROOM! TOGETHER WITH THE CAPTAIN, TONIGHT YOU MAY SOLVE THIS BAFFLING PROBLEM!

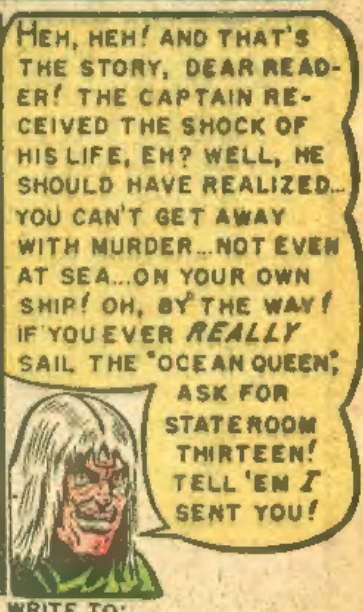
SEE YOU THEN, AT ABOUT TEN!

YES... STATEROOM 13!

YOUR DAY IS SPENT ANXIOUSLY... AND TOWARDS EVENING, YOU FIND YOURSELF BECOMING NERVOUS! FINALLY, IT IS TEN O'CLOCK... AND YOU MAKE YOUR WAY DOWN TO THE STATEROOM!

AH, CAPTAIN! RIGHT ON TIME I SEE!

LET'S GO IN!




IF YOU LIKE MY TALES AND HAVE *TIME TO KILL*... DROP ME A FEW LINES! WRITE TO:
THE CRYPT-KEEPER, RM. 706, DEPT. 20, 225 LAFAYETTE ST., N.Y.C. 12, N.Y.

# END OF THE SEARCH

The sun had already gone down behind the heavy jungle growth along both banks of the sluggish stream, when Canady beached his flimsy boat and staggered ashore. A hundred yards back from the swampy water's edge was a village he had never seen before . . . a primitive circle of weathered huts he hadn't known existed on this unmapped off-shoot of the Orinoco River. But there was good reason why it had escaped his notice during all the time he had been managing the Plantation. In his fifteen years in the tropics, he had never before ventured so far into Ivaro country.

Canady was led to a rambackle hut belonging to the village chief, and familiar with the manners of the people of the region he gave only passing notice to the grim-faced natives who had escorted him here from his boat . . . hardly noticed the cold and appraising eyes that watched him settle on the sand floor opposite the Chief.

"They don't like my being here," Canady thought to himself as he pretended to rearrange his belt, his fingers moving unobtrusively to make certain that his revolver was in its holster. Just in case! "They're an ugly-looking bunch . . . and they hate my barging into their village as much as I hate being here! But there's no choice . . . I've got to find a clue to Drucker's whereabouts!"

In the language of the jungle people Canady spoke . . . sometimes searching for words to express himself, sometimes in a surge of sound. Drucker . . . his plantation foreman . . . had disappeared a week before on an inspection trip. Just vanished from sight as if swallowed up by the earth. He had come to find him . . . would pay anyone who knew where Drucker was. Had they seen a tall man with red hair . . . a man who had a flame-colored moustache?

One of the guides rose from behind him, and in the ensuing silence Canady watched him cross the hut to the door. Watched the native's left foot as it passed momentarily over a grass mat and moved it several inches from its former resting place.

There was an object hidden under the mat and Canady braced himself, wondering whether the chief and his grim-faced tribesmen realized he had seen it. Canady began to rise, groping for his gun . . . and his hand trembled as it touched the empty holster. They knew . . . they had watched his face when he had seen the object!

And even as they began to close in on him, from all sides of the hut, Canady was conscious of the shrunken human head there on the floor, underneath the grass mat that had been moved . . . the head with the red hair looking so ludicrous over the shrivelled skin . . . the head with the bushy flame-colored moustache!

THERE WERE FOUR OF THEM... RICH, SPOILED, BORED! THEY HAD ALL THE MONEY THEY WANTED, THEY HAD BEEN EVERYWHERE AND DONE EVERYTHING! AND SO, WHEN SOMEONE SUGGESTED THAT THEY TRY THE MAGIC OF THE ANCIENTS, THEY BREWED...

# a FATAL CAPER!

THAT NIGHT, IN JIM ROBERT'S ROOMS, THE FOUR GOT TOGETHER WITH SHOUTS OF LAUGHTER...

BABY, IT TOOK ME HOURS TO GET THESE THINGS!

WHERE'D YOU EVER DREAM UP ALL THIS, MARYLYN? TOADS' TONGUES! A LAPWING'S EAR! THE FOOT OF A DAY-OLD BAT!

IT GIVES ME THE CREEPS BUT... I *LOVE* IT! HA! HA!

WE'RE ALL SICK OF EVERYTHING! I THOUGHT THAT WE COULD TRY SOME MAGIC SPELLS...OLD SPELLS WORKED BY CAGLIOSTRO AND DEE! THEY WON'T WORK, OF COURSE... BUT IT WILL BE FUN TO TRY...

FIRST THE HAIR OF A BABY MOUSE...

THE NAILS OF A DOG BORN DEAD...

THEN THE WING OF A BABY BAT!

NOW TIP OF EAR AND SPIT OF TONGUE! MOSS FROM A DEAD MAN'S GRAVE!

PINCH OF DUST FROM A MUMMY CASE!

STIR, STIR! WHISPER WORDS TO TOUCH THE EAR...

BELTANE, HOG'S BANE!

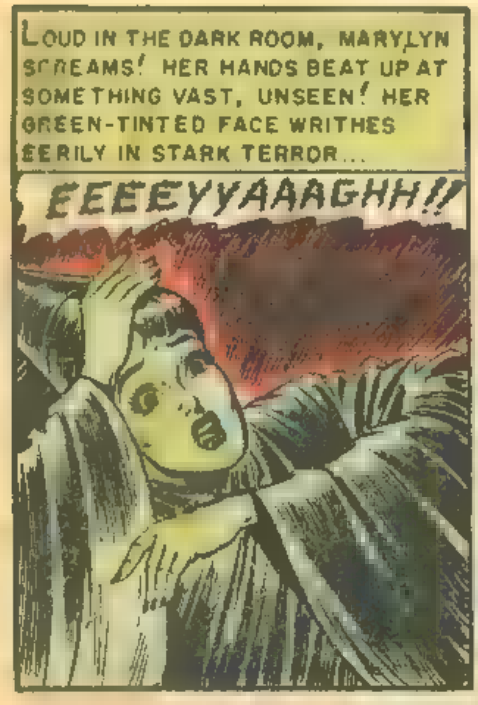
DOG'S TOOTH, WITCH'S RUTH...

AAAAAGGHH! LOOK!

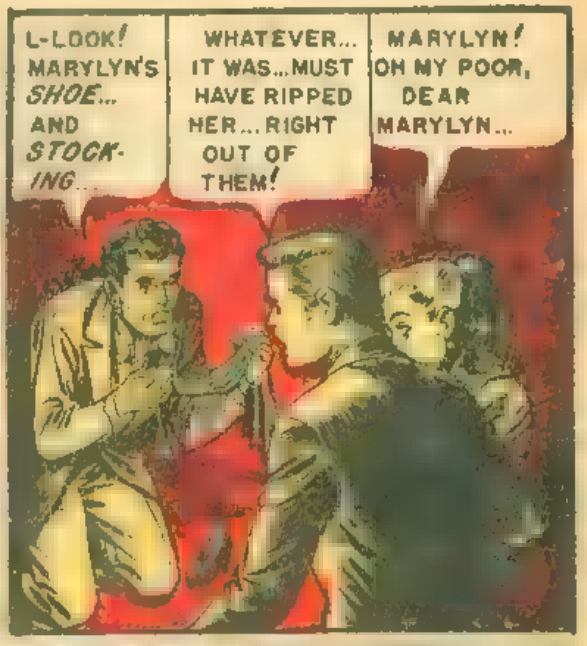
OH, MY...

WHA...WHAT WAS IT? I...I DIDN'T SEE...

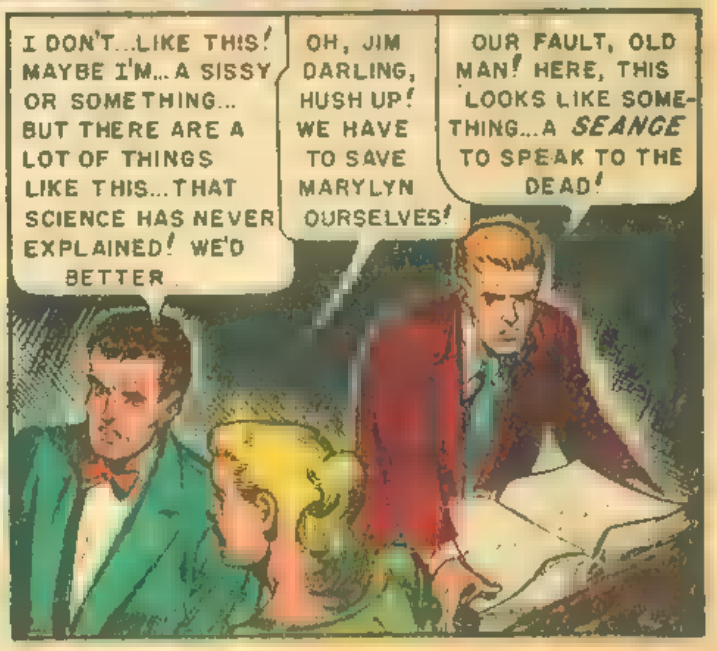
SOME *MONSTER*, MAN! AN AWFUL THING ...HELP ME! *MARYLYN*... YOU ALL RIGHT? MARYLYN... *ANSWER ME!*

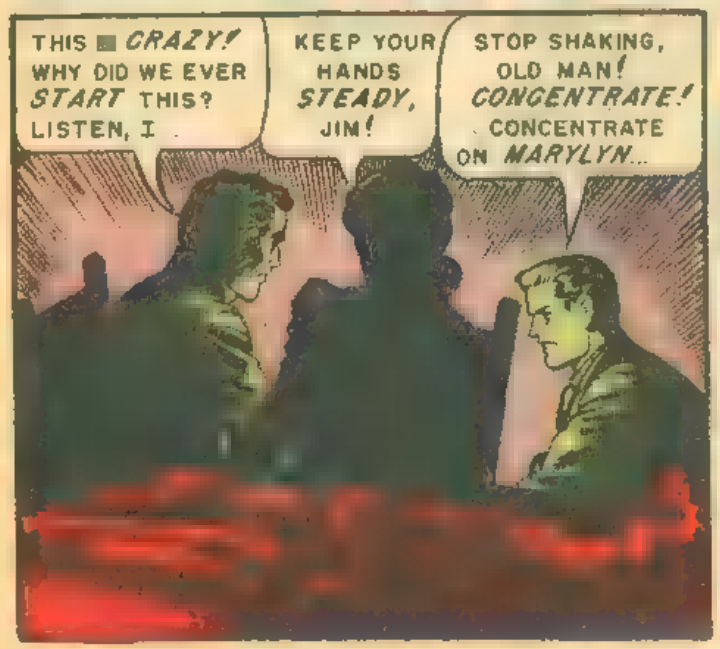

LOUD IN THE DARK ROOM, MARYLYN SCREAMS! HER HANDS BEAT UP AT SOMETHING VAST, UNSEEN! HER GREEN-TINTED FACE WRITHES EERILY IN STARK TERROR...
EEEEYYAAAGHH!!

GOT TO...HAVE LIGHT! GOT TO...KNOW WHA... WHAT HAPPENED...

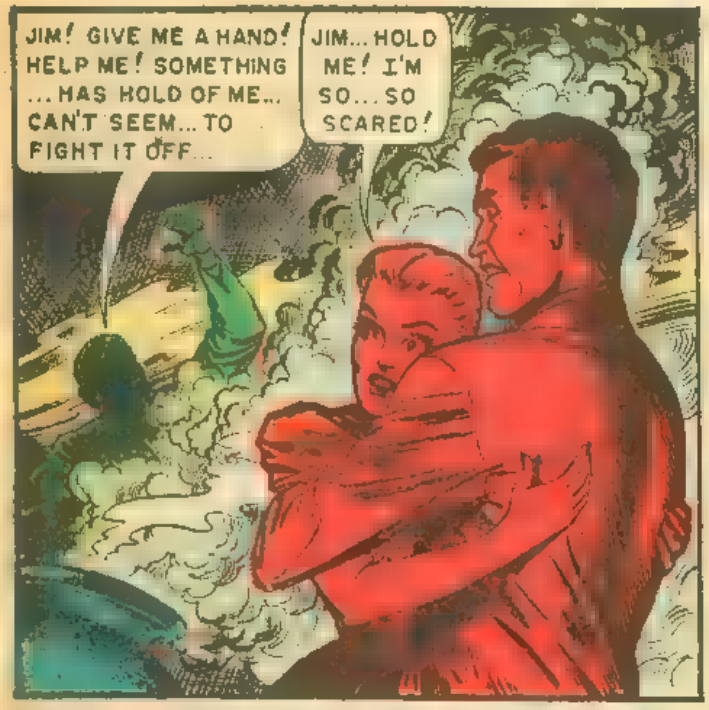

L-LOOK! MARYLYN'S SHOE... AND STOCKING...
WHATEVER... IT WAS...MUST HAVE RIPPED HER...RIGHT OUT OF THEM!
MARYLYN! OH MY POOR, DEAR MARYLYN...

LET'S GET...OUT OF HERE! CALL THE POLICE! GET HELP FROM... SOMEBODY!
JIM! JIM, NO! LISTEN...
WE CAN GET HER BACK OURSELVES, OLD MAN! -RELAX! RELAX! MAYBE IT'S JUST A MATTER OF ANOTHER SPELL OR SOMETHING...


I DON'T...LIKE THIS! MAYBE I'M...A SISSY OR SOMETHING... BUT THERE ARE A LOT OF THINGS LIKE THIS...THAT SCIENCE HAS NEVER EXPLAINED! WE'D BETTER...
OH, JIM DARLING, HUSH UP! WE HAVE TO SAVE MARYLYN OURSELVES!
OUR FAULT, OLD MAN! HERE, THIS LOOKS LIKE SOMETHING...A SEANCE TO SPEAK TO THE DEAD!


THIS CRAZY! WHY DID WE EVER START THIS? LISTEN, I...
KEEP YOUR HANDS STEADY, JIM!
STOP SHAKING, OLD MAN! CONCENTRATE! CONCENTRATE ON MARYLYN...

PEEEEEERRR... PLEEEAASE COOOOME TOOOO MEE
IT'S MARYLYN! SHE'S CALLING TO ME!
OH, MY HEAVEN! OHHHH...


JIM! GIVE ME A HAND! HELP ME! SOMETHING ...HAS HOLD OF ME... CAN'T SEEM... TO FIGHT IT OFF...
JIM... HOLD ME! I'M SO... SO SCARED!

AAAAGGGHHH!
HE'S...GONE, TOO! ONLY... HIS COAT-SLEEVE... RIPPED OFF! NOW I AM GOING FOR THE POLICE! THIS HAS GONE...TOO FAR...

NO! NO! NOT THE POLICE! I WON'T STAY HERE ALONE! JIM, YOU AND I... WE CAN DO IT... BY A DIFFERENT SPELL...
WINNIE, YOU'RE CRAZY! LET GO OF ME! PLEASE... CALM DOWN!

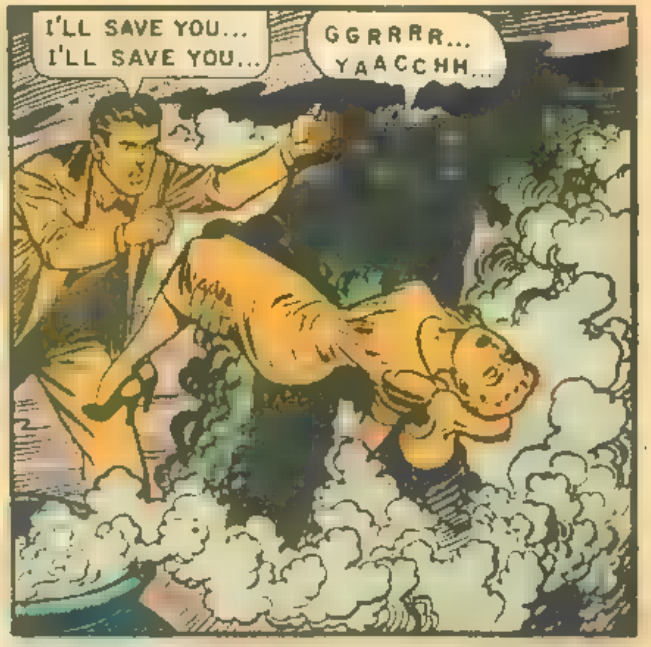
LISTEN TO ME! I WON'T LET YOU GO FOR THE POLICE! WE STARTED ALL THIS! WE CAN FINISH IT! BUT YOU MUST HELP ME! JIM...
ALL...RIGHT! I'LL DO...WHAT-EVER I CAN...

HEEELP USSSS...LOOOOK INNN THEEE BOOOOK...
DO YOU HEAR? THEY ARE CALLING TO US...FROM OVER YONDER... FROM SOMEWHERE... BEYOND THE GRAVE...

I DON'T LIKE IT. BUT I'LL GO THROUGH WITH IT..
STEADY, NOW! I'M GOING TO READ THE SPELL..

BY THE SECRETS OF THE NINE, BY THE SWORD OF SAMECH AND THE SPHINXED CHARIOT! BY THE BAPTISM OF THE FOUR ELEMENTS AND THE KEYS OF THE FIFTY GATES... I SUMMON YOU! APPEAR! BRING BACK THOSE YOU HAVE TAKEN!

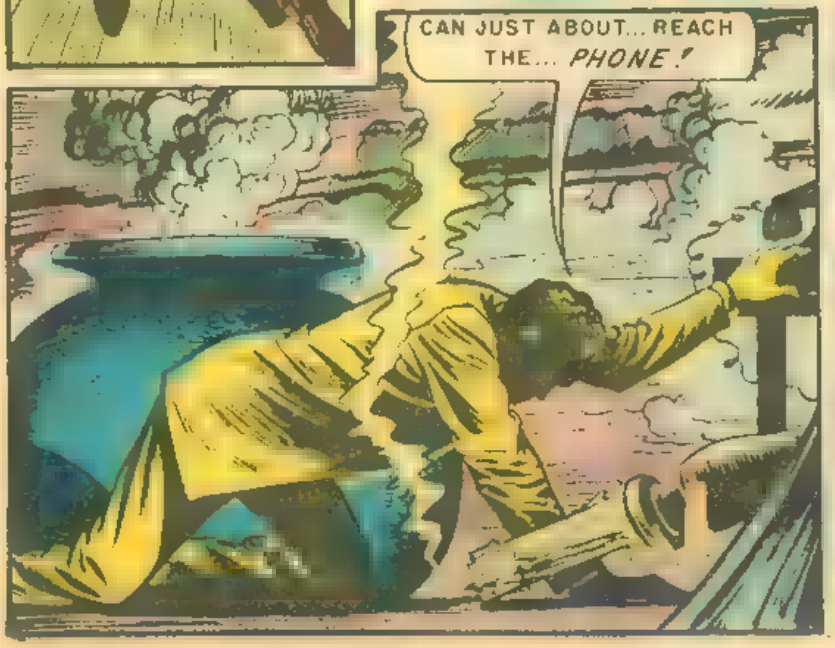
I COME! I COME AT YOUR CALL, ENCHANTRESS! I COME...
EEEYAAAGGH!
YOU... YOU...


I'LL SAVE YOU... I'LL SAVE YOU...
GGRRRR... YAACCHH...

SPLATTTT!

PANTING, SOBBING, HIS WORLD REELING AROUND HIM, JIM ROBERTS STARES AT THE GIGANTIC THING THAT THEIR SPELLS HAVE SUMMONED UP ... SHEER HORROR IN HIS EYES...
IT... GOT HER...!

GOT TO... GET HELP! CAN'T FIGHT... BY MYSELF! TOO ... WEAK!


CAN JUST ABOUT... REACH THE... PHONE!

GGGGNNNNYYYAAAAA...

HIS NERVES EXACERBATED, JIM COLLAPES IN A DEAD FAINT! HE DOES NOT SEE THE MONSTROUS HORROR BEND OVER HIM...
DOES NOT FEEL HIMSELF BEING LIFTED AND CARRIED...
JIM OPENS HIS EYES...TO FIND HIMSELF RECLINING IN A COFFIN... JUST AS THE GLOATING MONSTER IS SHUTTING THE HEAVY LID DOWN ON HIM!
NO... NO! DON'T... DON'T...!
WITH A THUD, THE COFFIN CLOSES!
HE'S... HAMMERING ME IN... CAN HEAR THE HAMMER... HITTING THE NAILS... SUFFOCATE... IN HERE... GETTING HARDER TO BREATHE...
ALL RIGHT, PETE! THE JOKE'S GONE FAR ENOUGH! HE LOOKED HALF DEAD WITH FEAR, IN THAT COFFIN. LET'S OPEN IT UP!
SURE, RIGHT AWAY! BOY, WAS HE EVER SCARED!
JIM SURE FELL FOR ALL THAT MUMBO-JUMBO! WHEEEE!
PUFF PUFF I--I CAN'T GET IT UP! IT'S STUCK!
PETE! JIM WILL SUFFOCATE IN THERE!
BESIDES... WE TOOK A BODY OUT TO MAKE ROOM FOR HIM! WE'VE GOT TO PUT IT BACK! COME ON BACK TO THE CAR. WE'LL GET SOME TOOLS!
YOU'RE NEXT, MISTER! AND YOU CAN REST ASSURED... I GOING TO BURY YOU.. DEEP!
6

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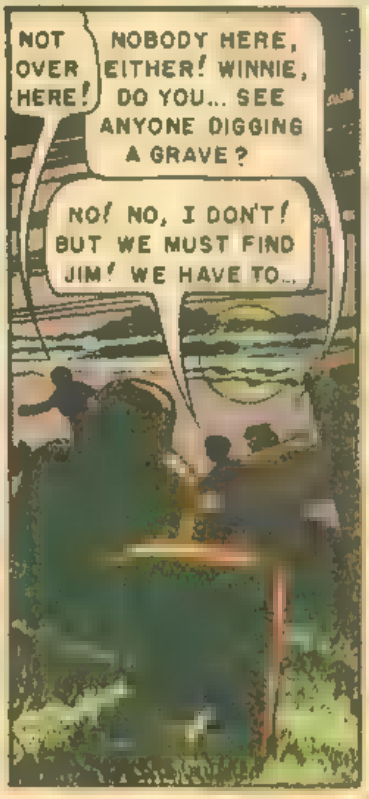
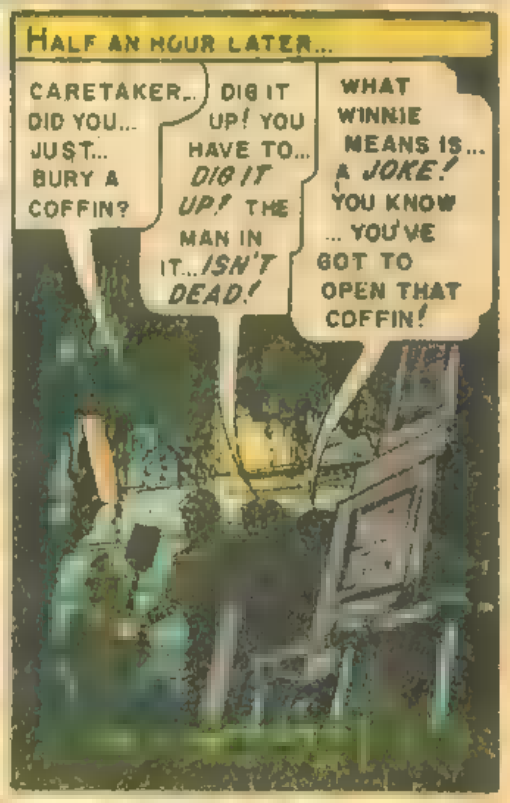
WITH A THUD, THE COFFIN CLOSES!
HE'S... HAMMERING ME IN... CAN HEAR THE HAMMER... HITTING THE NAILS... SUFFOCATE... IN HERE... GETTING HARDER TO BREATHE...
ALL RIGHT, PETE! THE JOKE'S GONE FAR ENOUGH! HE LOOKED HALF DEAD WITH FEAR, IN THAT COFFIN. LET'S OPEN IT UP!
SURE, RIGHT AWAY! BOY, WAS HE EVER SCARED!
JIM SURE FELL FOR ALL THAT MUMBO-JUMBO! WHEEEE!
PUFF PUFF I--I CAN'T GET IT UP! IT'S STUCK!
PETE! JIM WILL SUFFOCATE IN THERE!
BESIDES... WE TOOK A BODY OUT TO MAKE ROOM FOR HIM! WE'VE GOT TO PUT IT BACK! COME ON BACK TO THE CAR. WE'LL GET SOME TOOLS!
YOU'RE NEXT, MISTER! AND YOU CAN REST ASSURED... I GOING TO BURY YOU.. DEEP!
6

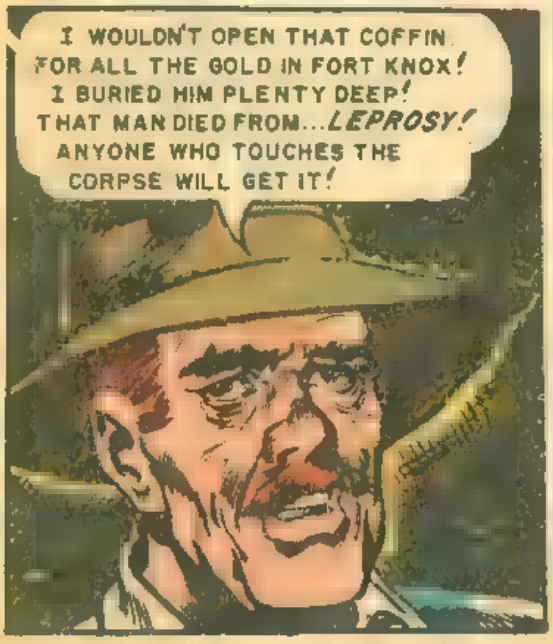
IT WORKED OUT PERFECTLY! ALL THOSE SCENIC EFFECTS...SMOKE AND THINGS... BUT WE'VE GOT TO GET THAT COFFIN OPEN!
PETER, HURRY!
I AM, I AM! GOOD GRIEF, I DON'T WANT ANYTHING TO HAPPEN TO JIM EITHER, YOU KNOW!

WE'VE GOT TO WORK FAST! SOMEBODY'S LIABLE TO FIND THE DEAD BODY WE TOOK OUT OF THAT COFFIN AND CARRIED AWAY...
UGGGH... DON'T REMIND ME! MY HANDS FEEL FUNNY JUST AT THE THOUGHT OF IT!
LOOK! THE COFFIN IS... GONE!

YOU DON'T SUPPOSE... ANYONE WAS SUPPOSED TO BURY THAT COFFIN...
THIS IS HORRIBLE! JIM WILL BE...BURIED ALIVE!
NO...NO! WE CAN STOP THAT! HURRY! WE HAVE TO FIND IT...


NOT OVER HERE!
NOBODY HERE, EITHER! WINNIE, DO YOU... SEE ANYONE DIGGING A GRAVE?
NO! NO, I DON'T! BUT WE MUST FIND JIM! WE HAVE TO...


HALF AN HOUR LATER...
CARETAKER... DID YOU... JUST... BURY A COFFIN?
DIG IT UP! YOU HAVE TO... DIG IT UP! THE MAN IN IT...ISN'T DEAD!
WHAT WINNIE MEANS IS... A JOKE! YOU KNOW ... YOU'VE GOT TO OPEN THAT COFFIN!


I WOULDN'T OPEN THAT COFFIN FOR ALL THE GOLD IN FORT KNOX! I BURIED HIM PLENTY DEEP! THAT MAN DIED FROM...LEPROSY! ANYONE WHO TOUCHES THE CORPSE WILL GET IT!

# SCIENCE FICTION FANS!

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ON SALE NOW AT ALL NEWSSTANDS!


# BACKFIRE

Ever since she insisted on buying the dog, he had hated the big golden animal his wife brought into the house! As far back as he could remember he had been afraid of dogs, even the tiny wriggling pups he saw in the Pet Shop windows . . . but this monster she had brought home was *huge*, even for a Great Dane!

The savage hate he felt toward the dog she called *Hamlet* grew with each passing day . . . and the hate was matched by his awful *fear!* Fear which multiplied until the mere sight of the animal was enough to start the cold chills running down his spine! And what was most frightening of all was his realization that his hatred was returned by *Hamlet!* If he wasn't careful . . . well, the dog was tremendously powerful . . .

. . . . .

It was all set . . . his wife would be away from the house for several hours! With meticulous care he examined the basement room he had fixed up . . . the room with no means of escape! The metal tub in one corner was all set for the bath he was going to give the dog in a few minutes . . . *Hamlet's* last bath!

He examined the pipes leading to the tub. With the faucets removed like this, the water which was even at this moment splashing in

could be turned off only from the *outside!* And with the lock fixed this way, all he would have to do would be to slam the door and it would be impossible to get out! The plan couldn't fail!

He smiled to himself . . . he would unchain *Hamlet* from the post right outside and bring him into the room. With the door shut on his way out, and the water running, he would never have to worry about that animal again!

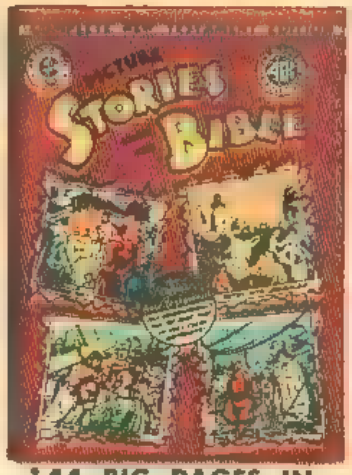
He whirled at the sound behind him, his eyes wide with terror! The door to the little room had slammed shut . . . and the water . . . there was no way to turn it off from in here!

* * * * *

Even standing on tip-toes on the edge of the tub the water reached almost to his lips! There was scarcely six inches left between the ceiling and the surface of the water! By tilting his head far back he was able to keep the air trickling in through his nostrils . . . but the water was rising by the second! For the hundredth time he screamed, at the top of his lungs: "H-HELP! *HAMLET! HELP!*"

But the only sound he could hear in response was the onrush of water . . . the flood that was even now beginning to surge up to his ears . . . into his mouth . . . pounding against his tightly-shut eyes!

He opened his mouth for a last scream for help . . . and there was the bruising impact of his head striking the cement ceiling! There was no air left in the flooded room . . . even the surging sound of the water had stopped! All he could hear was a thin bubbling sound . . . which seemed to start deep in his strangling throat . . .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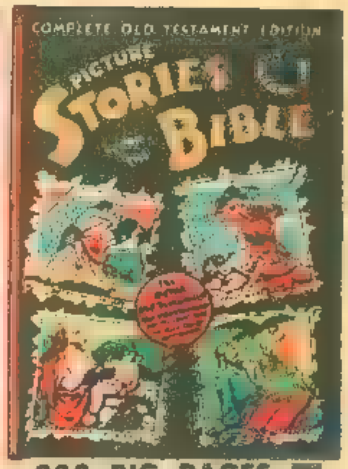


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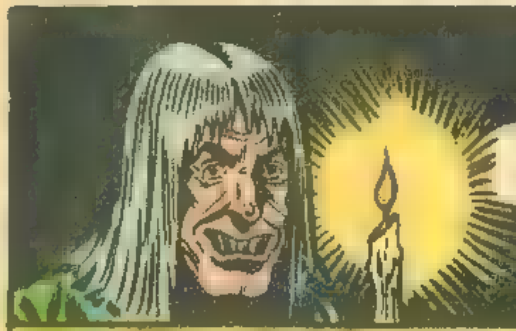


# THE CRYPT-KEEPER'S CORNER

*Drag over that battered COFFIN, kiddies, and stretch your palpitating CORPSES on the worm-eaten lid . . . (being very careful, of course, not to jar its worm-eaten contents!) . . . as it's once again time for another of our GRAVE discussions! The first item on my musty old list of things to DIG UP with you is the NEW TITLE of my now familiar magazine! As you no doubt are aware, my magazine has always been tops in TERROR . . . the first word in HORROR . . . and unsurpassed in SUSPENSE! So when my frightened publisher first agreed to publish my tales . . . which I keep here in the CRYPT . . . we called the magazine THE CRYPT OF TERROR! Lately, however, the old coot's ulcer has been acting up, and every time I've handed him the latest issue, his seeing the word TERROR in the title has given him a bad case of hiccups! This, naturally, aggravated the old boy's tummy even more . . . so for his sake, as well as for the sakes of all my readers with weak tummies, I reluctantly agreed to change the title of my TERROR-IFIC mag to TALES FROM THE CRYPT! But do not be alarmed, all you FIENDISH FANS! To paraphrase a phrase, a CORPSE by any other name is still a CORPSE! And let me assure you, THE CRYPT OF TERROR by any other name will still be . . . ah . . TERROR-BLE! Now let's dig into the MAIL MAUSOLEUM . . . which is CHOKED full of your epistolary gems . . . and peruse a few! (Gad, did I say THAT?)*

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

I hate to admit this, you old geezer, but your magazine is the very best HORROR-TERROR book I have ever read—barring none! I have an almost complete collection of THE CRYPT OF TERROR. However, I do not have issues No. 6, No. 9, and No. 16. I wrote to your publisher for them, and he informed me that these particular issues were sell-outs! So I am appealing to you. Please print this letter in your "corner." I will offer to pay as high as 75c apiece to anyone who can send me these issues in good condition!

Ed Szep
10 Ocean Parkway
Brooklyn, N. Y.

*O.K. Ed, there's your letter . . . good luck! For 75c apiece, I'd send you my own personal copies . . . but I've never kept them! Can't stand to have them around . . . they scare the daylights outa me!*

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

I want you to know that everytime a CRYPT OF TERROR is put on sale at my candy-store, I will buy it and will HAUNT you. You don't scare me!

A. (NMI) Ghost
(No address given!)

*So haunt me, Ghost! I dare you! Only you better not show up around the CRYPT! I might scare the SHEET off you! Go dissolve your ectoplasm in a vat of sulphuric acid!*

Dear Crypt-Keeper,

Your magazine leaves me cold!

The Occupant of Slab 13
City Morgue Refrigerator
Dodge City, Kansas

*Why don't you give yourself a hot-foot . . . with an acetylene-torch!*

CRYPT-KEEPER'S LITERARY SELECTIONS

A further listing of my favorite fine mystery literature, which you can obtain at your local library!

H. P. Lovecraft: Lurker-at the Threshhold
Karloff, Boris: And the Darkness Falls
Bram Stoker: The Mystery of the Sea

And so, dear readers, don't forget to tell all your friends about the new title of my magazine . . . I wouldn't want anyone to miss this issue because he was still looking for the CRYPT OF TERROR! And keep your letters pouring in . . . tell me what type of stories you like best! Just write to: THE CRYPT-KEEPER, Rm. 706, Dept. 20, 225 Lafayette Street, N. Y. C. 12, N. Y.

# Rx... DEATH!

GOOD LORD! DON'T LOOK AT IT, MISS BENNETT! IT'S TOO HORRIBLE!

PERHAPS IT WAS THE FACT THAT OUR CHILDHOOD WAS MISERABLE...OUR PARENTS BEING POVERTY-STRICKEN! PERHAPS IT WAS THE FACT THAT I, JANET BENNETT, HAD REMAINED UNMARRIED, AND HAD CONTINUED TO LIVE WITH MY BROTHER GREGORY, THEREBY INCREASING HIS RESPONSIBILITIES! WHATEVER THE REASON, GREGG HAD SHUT HIMSELF OFF FROM THE WORLD TO STUDY... TO BETTER HIMSELF...HIS LIFE... AND MINE...

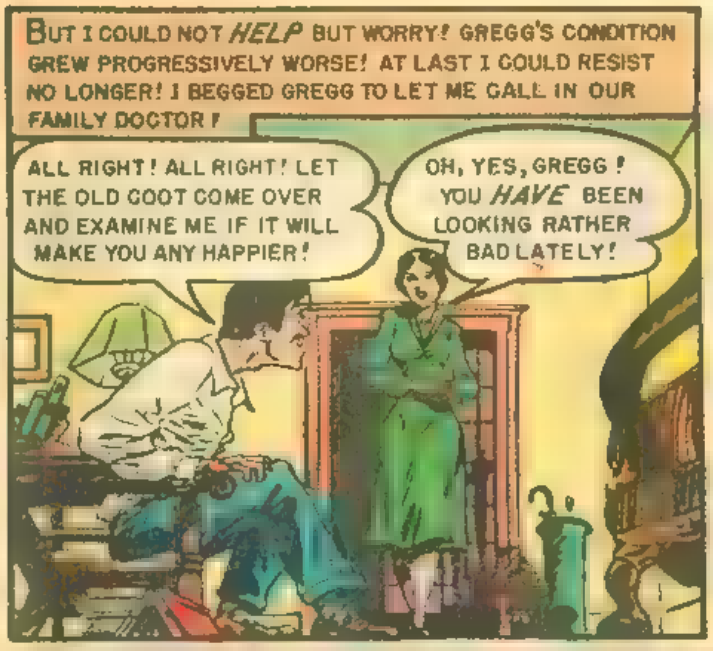
GREGG! YOU MUST GET SOME SLEEP!

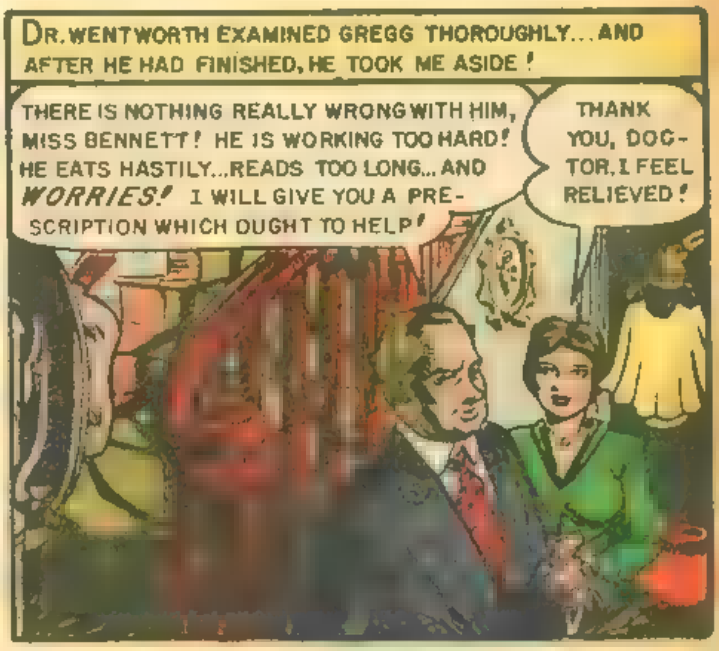
LEAVE ME ALONE, SIS! I'LL BE ALL RIGHT...

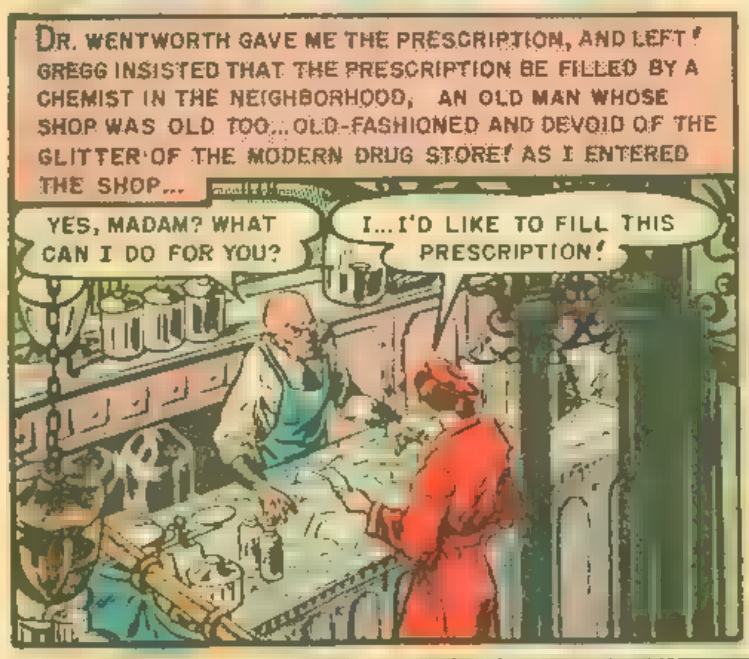
HIS DAYS OCCUPIED IN HIS REGULAR JOB, GREGG SAT UP HALF THE NIGHT PORING OVER TEXT BOOKS! I KNEW THAT SUCH HARD WORK... CONSTANT STUDY...WOULD HAVE ITS EFFECT! HE GREW PALE... HIS EYES CLOUDED...

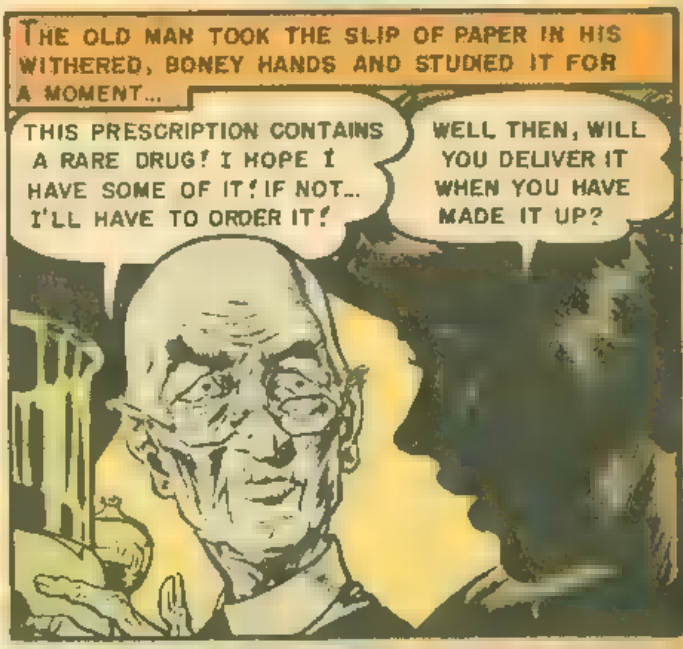
GREGG! YOU MUST STOP DRIVING YOURSELF! YOU WILL BECOME ILL...

I AM TAKING CARE OF MYSELF, JANET! DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME!

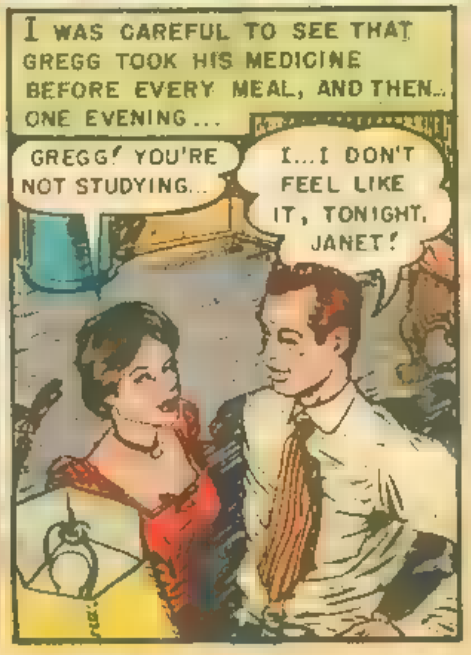

BUT I COULD NOT *HELP* BUT WORRY! GREGG'S CONDITION GREW PROGRESSIVELY WORSE! AT LAST I COULD RESIST NO LONGER! I BEGGED GREGG TO LET ME CALL IN OUR FAMILY DOCTOR!
ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT! LET THE OLD COOT COME OVER AND EXAMINE ME IF IT WILL MAKE YOU ANY HAPPIER!
OH, YES, GREGG! YOU *HAVE* BEEN LOOKING RATHER BAD LATELY!


DR. WENTWORTH EXAMINED GREGG THOROUGHLY... AND AFTER HE HAD FINISHED, HE TOOK ME ASIDE!
THERE IS NOTHING REALLY WRONG WITH HIM, MISS BENNETT! HE IS WORKING TOO HARD! HE EATS HASTILY...READS TOO LONG... AND *WORRIES!* I WILL GIVE YOU A PRESCRIPTION WHICH OUGHT TO HELP!
THANK YOU, DOCTOR. I FEEL RELIEVED!


DR. WENTWORTH GAVE ME THE PRESCRIPTION, AND LEFT! GREGG INSISTED THAT THE PRESCRIPTION BE FILLED BY A CHEMIST IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD, AN OLD MAN WHOSE SHOP WAS OLD TOO... OLD-FASHIONED AND DEVOID OF THE GLITTER OF THE MODERN DRUG STORE! AS I ENTERED THE SHOP...
YES, MADAM? WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?
I...I'D LIKE TO FILL THIS PRESCRIPTION!


THE OLD MAN TOOK THE SLIP OF PAPER IN HIS WITHERED, BONEY HANDS AND STUDIED IT FOR A MOMENT...
THIS PRESCRIPTION CONTAINS A RARE DRUG! I HOPE I HAVE SOME OF IT! IF NOT... I'LL HAVE TO ORDER IT!
WELL THEN, WILL YOU DELIVER IT WHEN YOU HAVE MADE IT UP?

THAT EVENING, THE MEDICINE ARRIVED, AND I SAW THAT GREGG TOOK IT BEFORE DINNER!
THERE! DOES IT TASTE BAD?
RATHER TASTELESS! NOT TOO BAD, SIS!


I WAS CAREFUL TO SEE THAT GREGG TOOK HIS MEDICINE BEFORE EVERY MEAL, AND THEN... ONE EVENING...
GREGG! YOU'RE NOT STUDYING...
I...I DON'T FEEL LIKE IT, TONIGHT, JANET!

HE BEGAN TO PACE THE FLOOR AS IF UNDECIDED WHAT TO DO WITH HIMSELF... AND THEN...
I THINK I'LL GO OUT TONIGHT, JANET! TAKE IN A SHOW! DON'T WAIT UP FOR ME...
OH... ALL RIGHT, GREGG!

I REJOICED! AT LAST GREGG HAD BROKEN AWAY FOR AN EVENING OF RELAXATION! I WATCHED HIM AS HE SAUNTERED DOWN THE STREET! I DON'T KNOW WHAT TIME HE CAME IN... BUT THE NEXT MORNING, AT BREAKFAST, HIS EYES GLEAMED...

OH, GREGG! YOU LOOK SO WELL!

AND I FEEL IT, TOO! I HAD A GRAND TIME LAST NIGHT! MET SOME OLD COLLEGE CHUMS!

*THAT NIGHT* GREGG WENT OUT *AGAIN*, AND AGAIN THE *NEXT NIGHT!* HE WAS A CHANGED MAN... HE BECAME A LOVER OF PLEASURE... A HUNTER OF RESTAURANTS AND GAY PLACES! I WAS HAPPY... AND YET... ALTHOUGH I KNEW NOT WHY... I WAS FRIGHTENED...

WHY DO YOU LOOK AT ME SO STRANGELY, SIS? WHAT DO YOU SEE?

I... I DON'T KNOW, GREGG!

THE DAYS WENT BY AND GREGG CONTINUED TO TAKE HIS MEDICINE... RENEWING THE PRESCRIPTION FROM THE OLD CHEMIST WHEN IT RAN OUT! ONE MORNING...

GREGG! I... I... GOOD LORD!

WHAT? YOU SAY SOMETHING, SIS?

HIS EYES FOLLOWED MY STARE! A FINGER... THE LITTLE FINGER OF HIS RIGHT HAND... WAS ALL WRINKLED AND WITHERED! IT LOOKED... LIKE IT WAS ROTTING AWAY...

Philippines Davit Cup Test

GREGG QUICKLY WRAPPED THE HORRIBLE LOOKING DIGIT IN HIS HANDKERCHIEF AND STAMMERED...

I... I BURNED IT... LAST NIGHT... I...

LET ME BANDAGE IT FOR YOU, GREGG!

HORROR FLOODED INTO GREGG'S EYES! HE JUMPED UP, DREW AWAY FROM MY OUTSTRETCHED HANDS

NO! NO! I'LL DO IT UP MYSELF! LEAVE ME BE...

WHY... GREGG!

THAT NIGHT, AFTER GREGG WENT OUT, I CALLED DR. WENTWORTH... BUT HE HAD GONE OUT OF TOWN! HE WOULD NOT BE BACK TILL MORNING! I SAT STARING OUT OF THE WINDOW... AND ABOUT MIDNIGHT I WAS AWAKENED BY THE KEY IN THE LOCK...

GREGG! WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOUR HAND?

I... I CUT IT! WHY DO YOU *PRY*?

I CANNOT DESCRIBE THE FEAR THAT CREPT INTO MY HEART AS GREGG SNAPPED AT ME! THERE WAS A STRANGE LOOK IN HIS EYES! A LOOK I HAD NEVER SEEN BEFORE...

I AM GOING TO MY ROOM! BRING MY BREAKFAST TRAY UP IN THE MORNING AND LEAVE IT AT THE DOOR...

THE NEXT MORNING, I FOLLOWED GREGG'S INSTRUCTIONS... LEAVING HIS TRAY! THEN I RUSHED OVER TO SEE DR. WENTWORTH...

MY DEAR! YOU SAY HE *STILL* TAKES THE STUFF!

YES! REGULARLY!

WELL, WHERE DOES HE HAVE THE PRESCRIPTION FILLED?

AT THE OLD CHEMISTS' ON BROOM STREET.

DR. WENTWORTH GOT HIS COAT AND WE HURRIED TO THE OLD-FASHION CHEMIST SHOP! THE OLD MAN GREETED US AND THE DOCTOR PROCEEDED TO ASK SOME QUESTIONS...

OH, YES! MR. BENNETT HAS BEEN IN REGULARLY TO FILL THAT PRESCRIPTION! CONTAINS A RARE DRUG WHICH I'LL HAVE TO ORDER, NOW! I ONLY HAD A LITTLE... HAD IT A *LONG TIME* TOO...

HMMM! LET ME SEE THE DRUG YOU USED, SIR!

THE OLD MAN WENT INTO THE BACK AND RETURNED WITH A MUSTY CANISTER, WHICH HE PRIED OPEN FOR THE DOCTOR...

PHEW! WHAT *IS* THIS? THIS IS *NOT* WHAT I PRESCRIBED! OH YES, I SEE THE LABEL IS RIGHT... BUT I TELL YOU THIS IS *NOT THE DRUG!*

I...I... I'VE HAD IT FOR SOME TIME... MAYBE A...FEW YEARS! I...I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY!

THE DOCTOR TOOK THE CANISTER, AND WE LEFT...

DOCTOR WENTWORTH! I SHOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHAT MY BROTHER HAS BEEN TAKING FOR THE PAST MONTH OR SO

FRANKLY, MISS BENNETT, I *DO NOT KNOW!* I SHALL HAVE IT ANALYZED... BUT I HAVE A FEELING THAT THIS GOES BEYOND THE REALM OF CHEMISTRY AND MEDICAL SCIENCE!

THAT EVENING MY BROTHER GREGG DID NOT GO OUT AS USUAL! HE CAME DOWN FROM HIS ROOM AND ANNOUNCED...

I HAVE HAD MY LITTLE FLING, BUT NOW IT IS OVER! I AM GOING BACK TO MY BOOKS! I DO NOT WANT TO BE DISTURBED! I WILL REMAIN IN MY ROOM... MY MEALS WILL BE SENT UP AND LEFT OUTSIDE! IS THAT CLEAR?

YES, GREGG!

GREGG WENT BACK TO HIS ROOM... AND THE NEXT MORNING, WHEN I PLACED HIS BREAKFAST TRAY BEFORE THE DOOR...

GREGG! BREAKFAST!

LEAVE IT AND GO!

I STARTED DOWNSTAIRS, AND THEN REMEMBERED SOMETHING I WANTED FROM *MY* BEDROOM! AS I STARTED BACK...

YOU'RE *SPYING* ON ME! I DON'T WANT YOU SPYING ON ME!

GREGG! YOUR ARMS! THEY'RE ALL BANDAGED!

I RUSHED TO HIM, BUT HE PICKED UP HIS TRAY AND SLAMMED HIS DOOR... LOCKING IT...

OH, GREGG!... SOB... GREGG!

I WENT DOWNSTAIRS, AND CALLED THE DOCTOR...

ANY NEWS, DOCTOR?

I'VE SENT IT OFF, MISS BENNETT! IT WILL BE ABOUT A WEEK BEFORE WE KNOW!

WHEN I DID NOT SEE GREGG FOR SEVERAL DAYS, I CALLED DR. WENTWORTH AGAIN... AND TOLD HIM OF GREGG'S WRINKLED, ROTTED FINGER... HIS BANDAGED HAND AND HIS BANDAGED ARMS...

I HAVEN'T HEARD FROM THE LABORATORY YET, MISS BENNETT, BUT I THINK I'D BETTER COME OVER...

YES... DOCTOR!

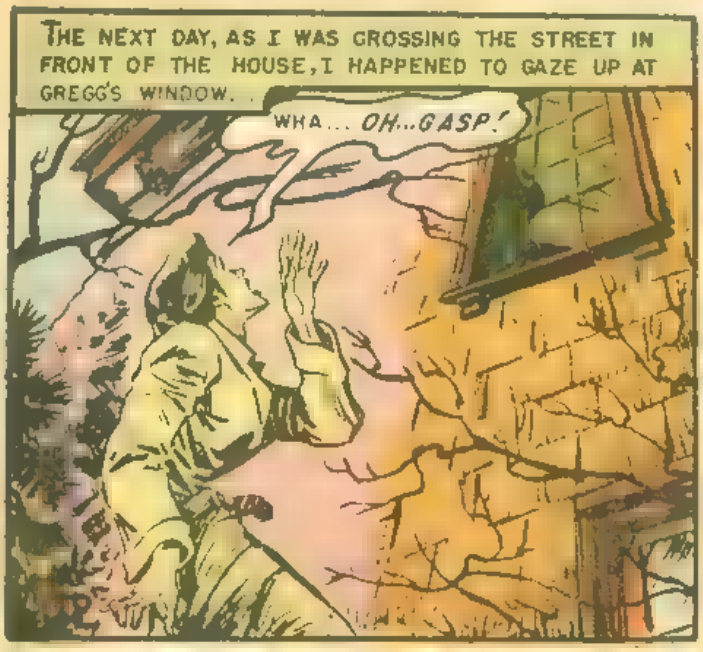
DR. WENTWORTH ARRIVED AND WENT UPSTAIRS! I HEARD HIM KNOCK AND GO IN! AFTER A WHILE HE CAME DOWNSTAIRS! THERE WAS UNUTTERABLE HORROR IN HIS EYES! HE GULPED... STEADYING HIMSELF BY GRASPING THE BANISTER...

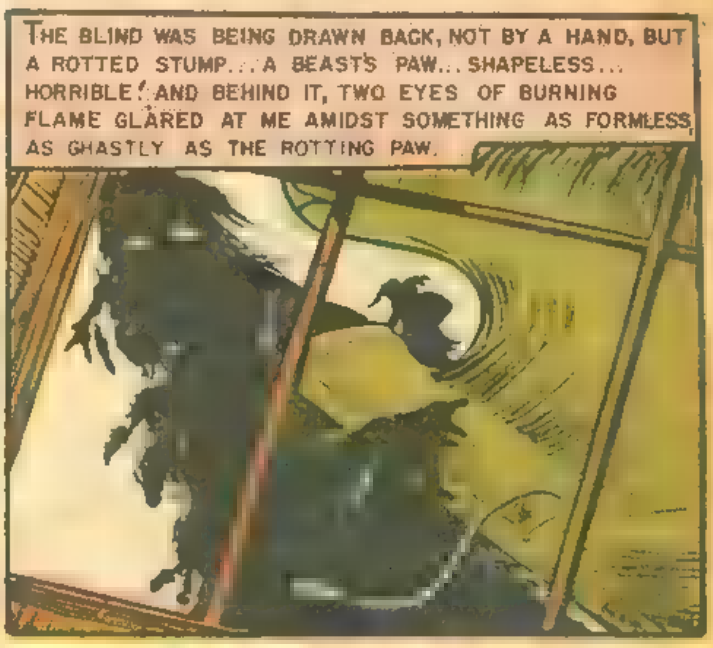
I HAVE... SEEN HIM! CHOKE... I HAVE... EXAMINED HIM! AND I AM IN MY SENSES! I HAVE DEALT WITH DEATH ALL MY LIFE... BUT I... NEVER... NOTHING... *LIKE THIS*... NO, *NO!*

HE COVERED HIS FACE WITH HIS HANDS AS IF TO SHUT OUT A HORRID SIGHT... AND THEN HE TURNED!

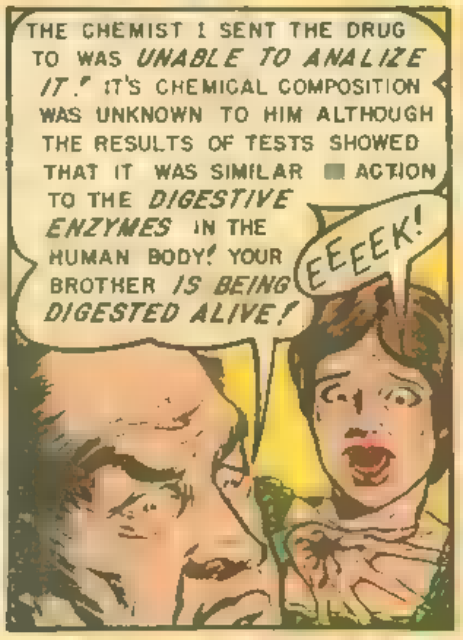
DO NOT SEND FOR ME AGAIN, MISS BENNETT! I CAN DO NOTHING IN THIS HOUSE!

BUT... DOCTOR... DOCTOR!

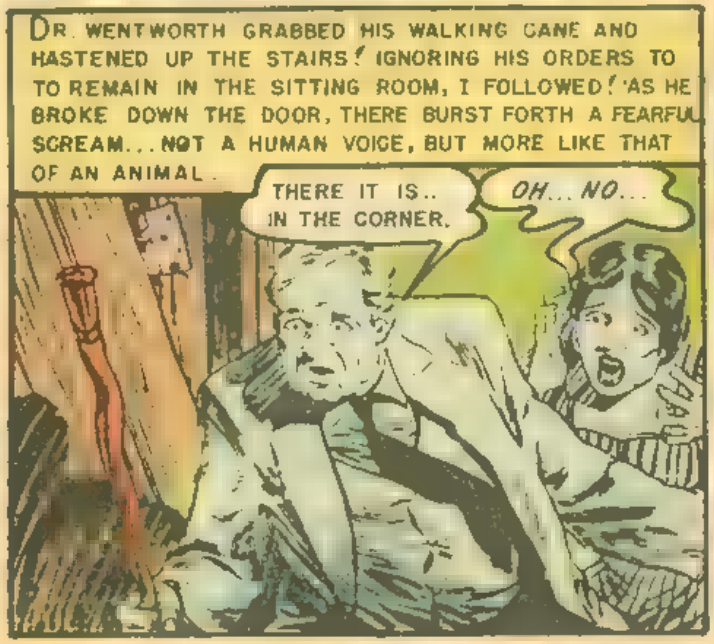

THE NEXT DAY, AS I WAS CROSSING THE STREET IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE, I HAPPENED TO GAZE UP AT GREGG'S WINDOW.
WHA... OH...GASP!

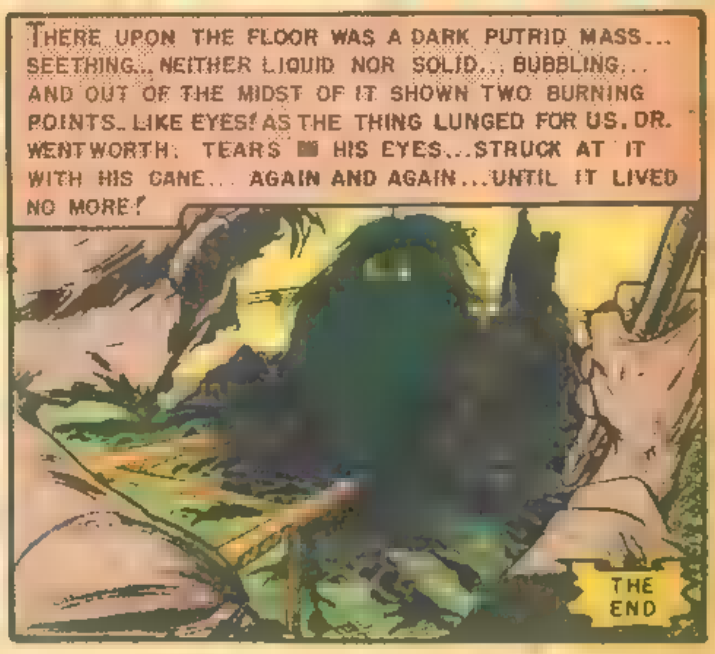

THE BLIND WAS BEING DRAWN BACK, NOT BY A HAND, BUT A ROTTED STUMP... A BEAST'S PAW... SHAPELESS... HORRIBLE! AND BEHIND IT, TWO EYES OF BURNING FLAME GLARED AT ME AMIDST SOMETHING AS FORMLESS, AS GHASTLY AS THE ROTTING PAW.

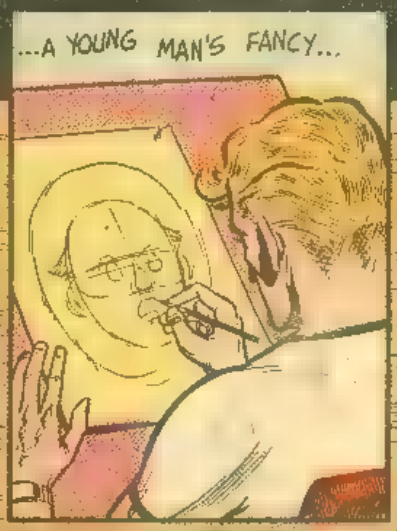
I CALLED DR. WENTWORTH AS SOON AS I GOT INTO THE HOUSE... AND, ALTHOUGH AT FIRST HE REFUSED, MY FRIGHTENED TEARS FINALLY PERSUADED HIM TO COME! WE SAT DOWN IN THE SITTING ROOM...
PLEASE, DOCTOR! YOU MUST TELL ME WHAT IS WRONG WITH GREGG!
I AM AFRAID, MISS BENNETT, THAT THIS WHOLE EPISODE IS MOST UNNATURAL! THERE ARE FORCES INVOLVED HERE SUPERNATURAL FORCES... THAT WE TODAY KNOW LITTLE ABOUT!


THE CHEMIST I SENT THE DRUG TO WAS UNABLE TO ANALIZE IT! IT'S CHEMICAL COMPOSITION WAS UNKNOWN TO HIM ALTHOUGH THE RESULTS OF TESTS SHOWED THAT IT WAS SIMILAR ACTION TO THE DIGESTIVE ENZYMES IN THE HUMAN BODY! YOUR BROTHER IS BEING DIGESTED ALIVE!
EEEEEK!

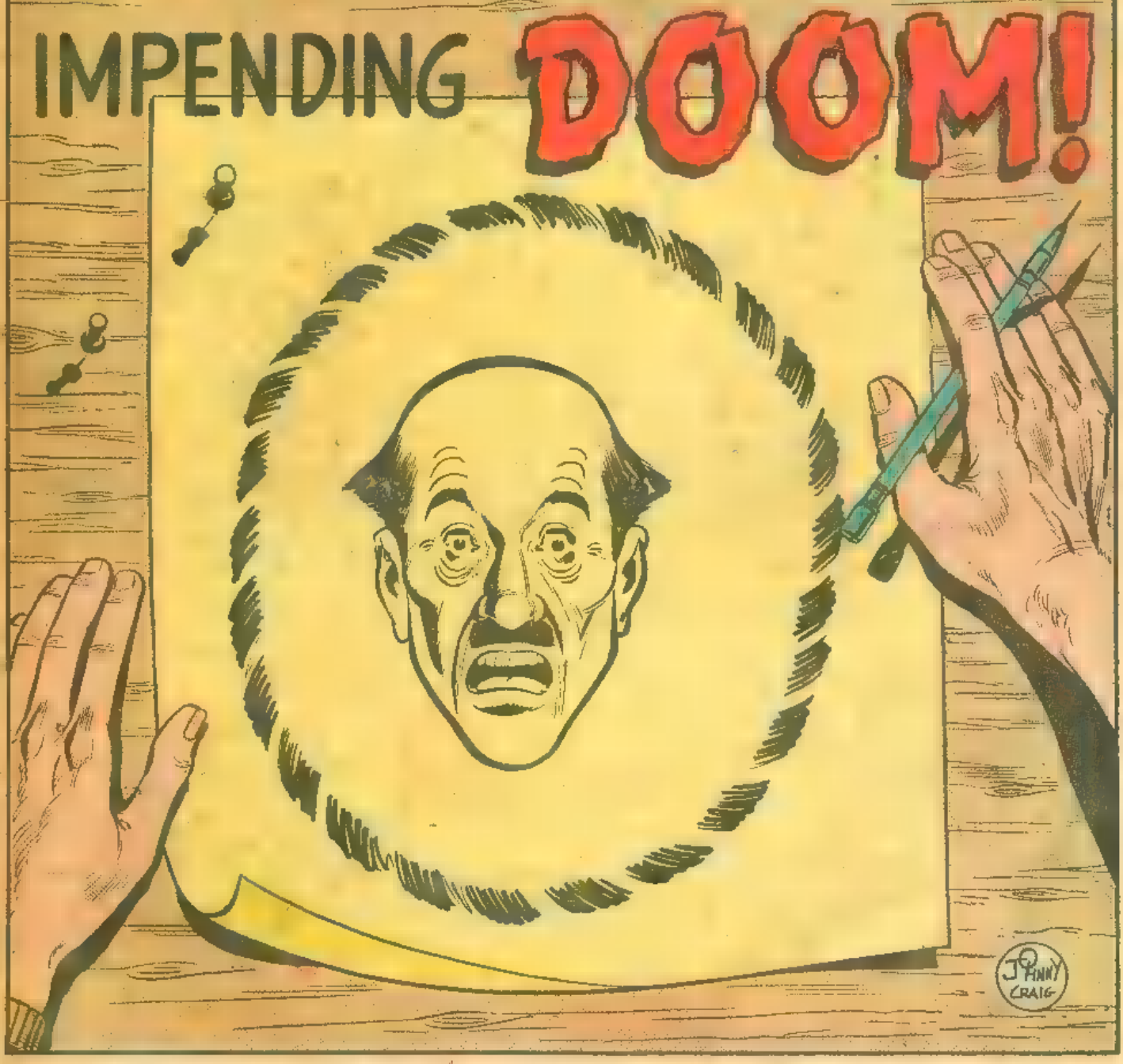
SOMETHING WET HAD FALLEN ON MY HAND! I LOOKED UP! THE CEILING WAS BLACK AND DRIPPING...
THAT... THAT'S GREGG'S ROOM UP THERE!
SO SOON... SO SOON! STAY HERE!

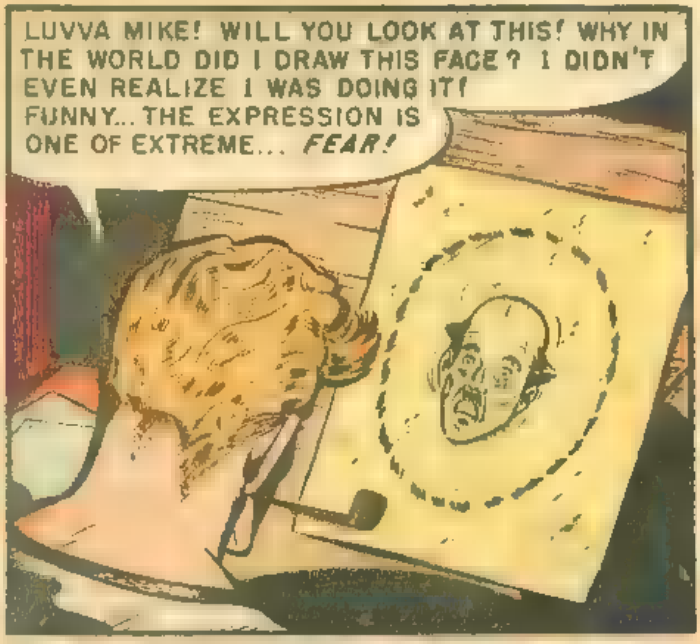

DR. WENTWORTH GRABBED HIS WALKING CANE AND HASTENED UP THE STAIRS! IGNORING HIS ORDERS TO TO REMAIN IN THE SITTING ROOM, I FOLLOWED! AS HE BROKE DOWN THE DOOR, THERE BURST FORTH A FEARFUL SCREAM... NOT A HUMAN VOICE, BUT MORE LIKE THAT OF AN ANIMAL.
THERE IT IS.. IN THE CORNER.
OH... NO...

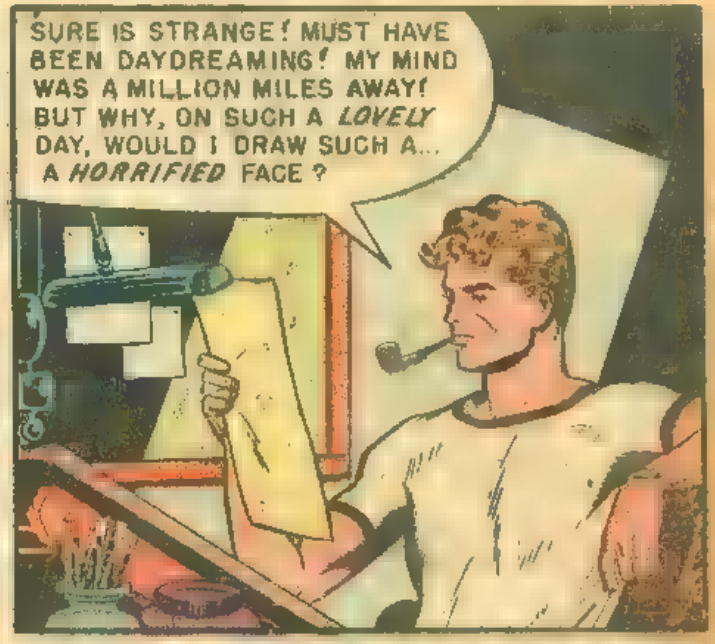

THERE UPON THE FLOOR WAS A DARK PUTRID MASS... SEETHING... NEITHER LIQUID NOR SOLID... BUBBLING... AND OUT OF THE MIDST OF IT SHOWN TWO BURNING POINTS... LIKE EYES! AS THE THING LUNGED FOR US, DR. WENTWORTH, TEARS HIS EYES... STRUCK AT IT WITH HIS CANE... AGAIN AND AGAIN... UNTIL IT LIVED NO MORE!
THE END

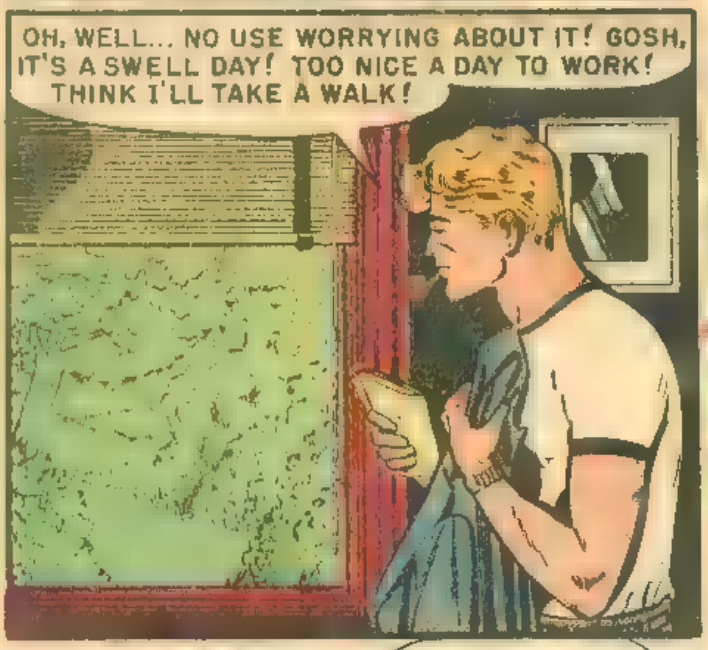


# IMPENDING DOOM!

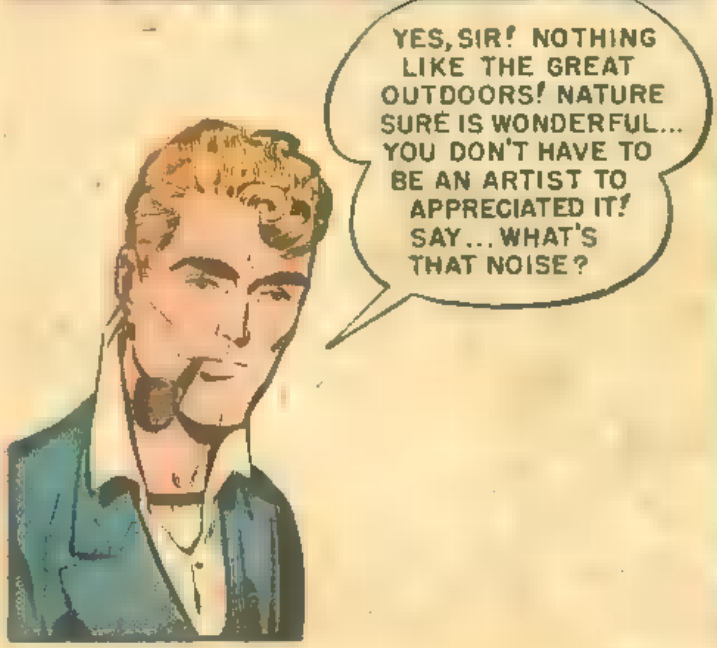


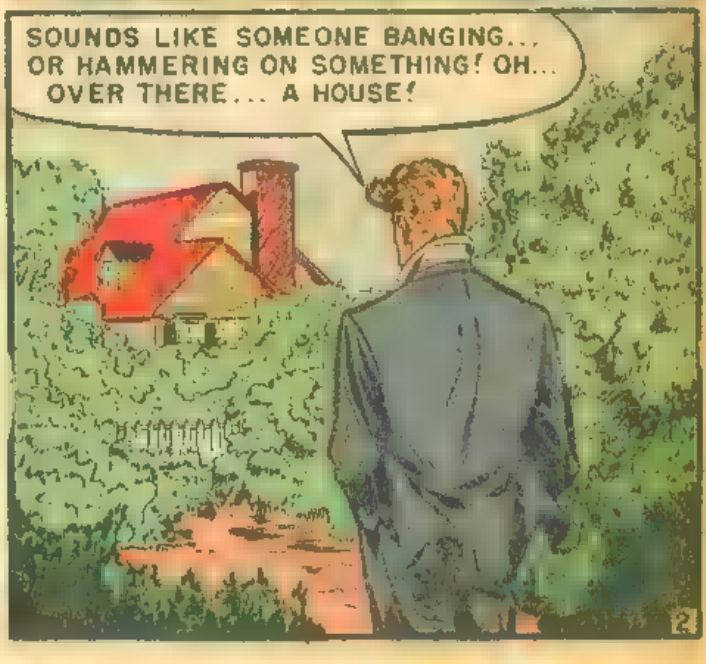

LUVVA MIKE! WILL YOU LOOK AT THIS! WHY IN THE WORLD DID I DRAW THIS FACE? I DIDN'T EVEN REALIZE I WAS DOING IT! FUNNY... THE EXPRESSION IS ONE OF EXTREME... *FEAR!*

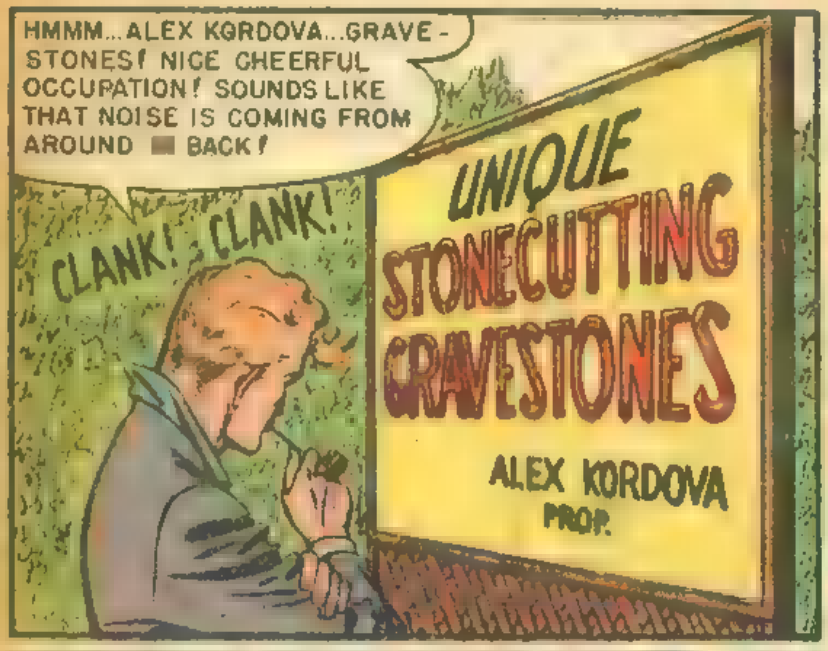

SURE IS STRANGE! MUST HAVE BEEN DAYDREAMING! MY MIND WAS A MILLION MILES AWAY! BUT WHY, ON SUCH A *LOVELY* DAY, WOULD I DRAW SUCH A... A *HORRIFIED* FACE?

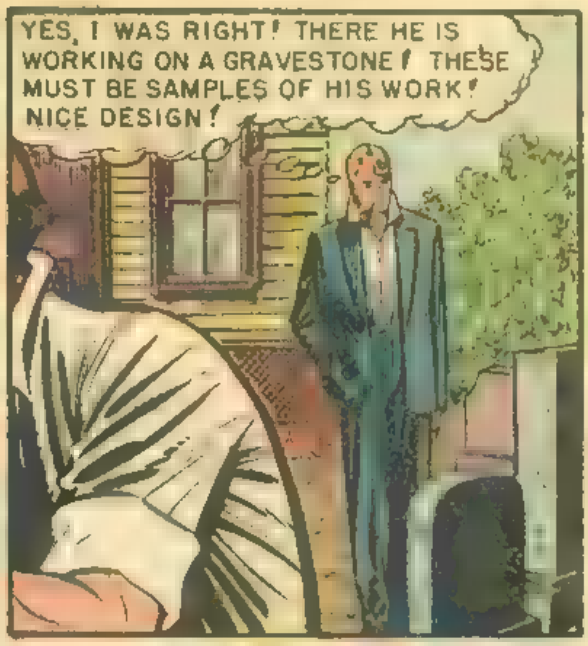

OH, WELL... NO USE WORRYING ABOUT IT! GOSH, IT'S A SWELL DAY! TOO NICE A DAY TO WORK! THINK I'LL TAKE A WALK!

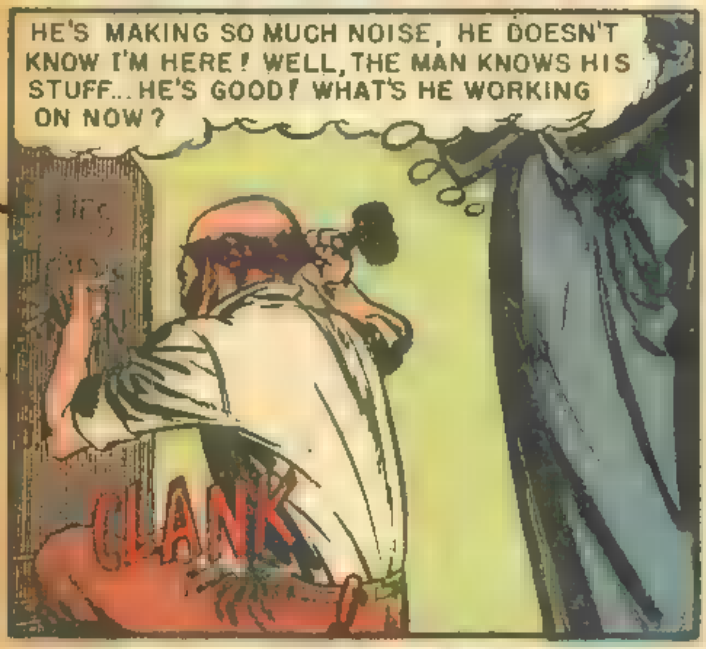
SOMETIME LATER...
... DOES A PERSON GOOD TO GET SOME CLEAN, FRESH AIR... SUNSHINE! I'VE WALKED A GOOD FIVE MILES AND I DON'T FEEL A BIT TIRED!

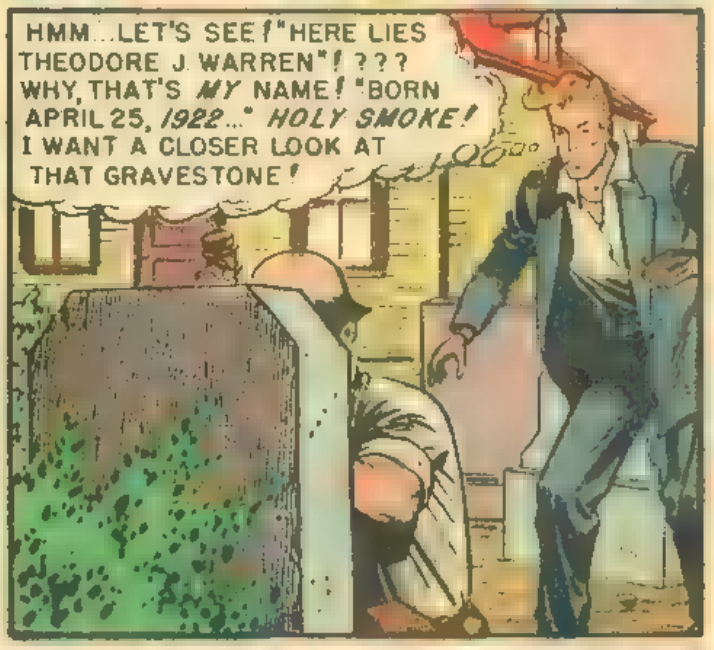

YES, SIR! NOTHING LIKE THE GREAT OUTDOORS! NATURE SURE IS WONDERFUL... YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE AN ARTIST TO APPRECIATED IT! SAY... WHAT'S THAT NOISE?

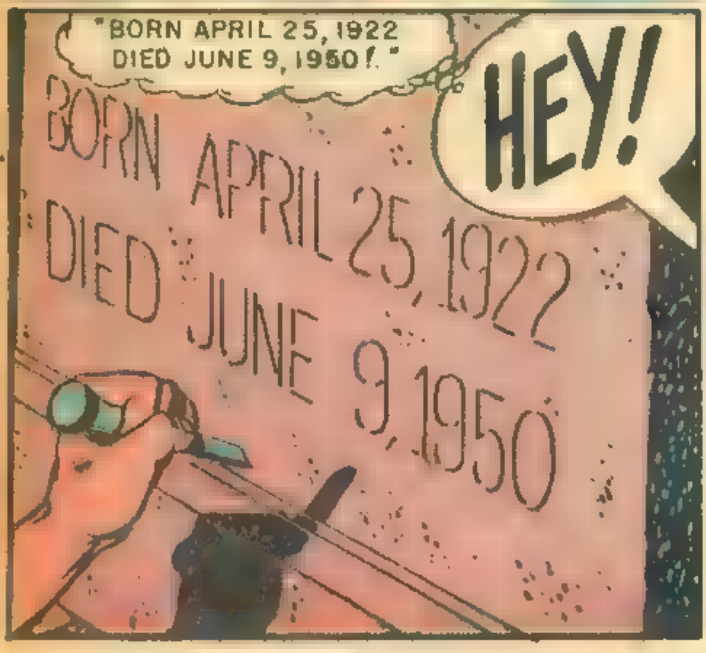

SOUNDS LIKE SOMEONE BANGING... OR HAMMERING ON SOMETHING! OH... OVER THERE... A HOUSE!

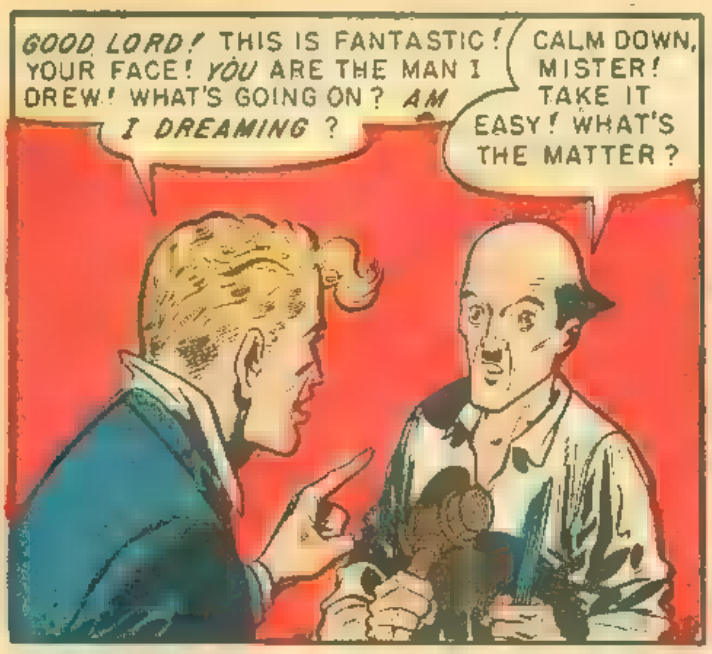

HMMM...ALEX KORDOVA...GRAVE-STONES! NICE CHEERFUL OCCUPATION! SOUNDS LIKE THAT NOISE IS COMING FROM AROUND ■ BACK!
CLANK! CLANK!
UNIQUE STONECUTTING GRAVESTONES
ALEX KORDOVA PROP.

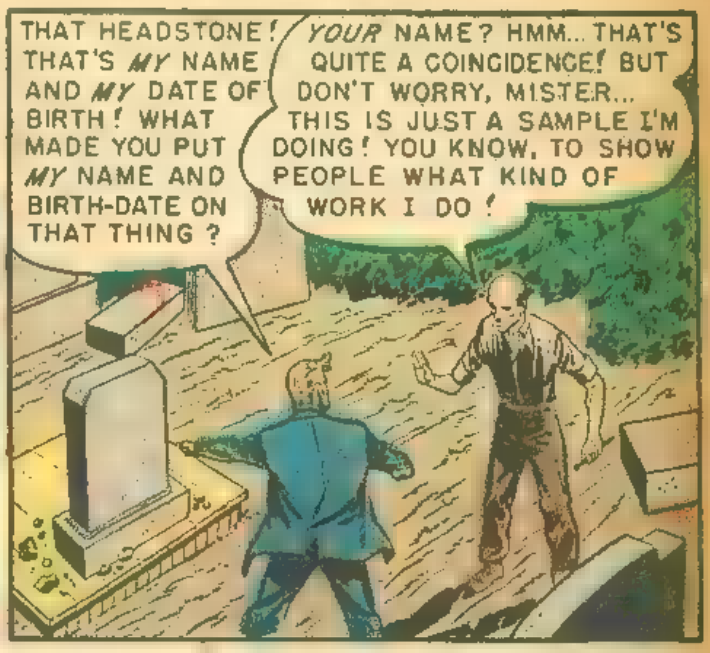

YES, I WAS RIGHT! THERE HE IS WORKING ON A GRAVESTONE! THESE MUST BE SAMPLES OF HIS WORK! NICE DESIGN!

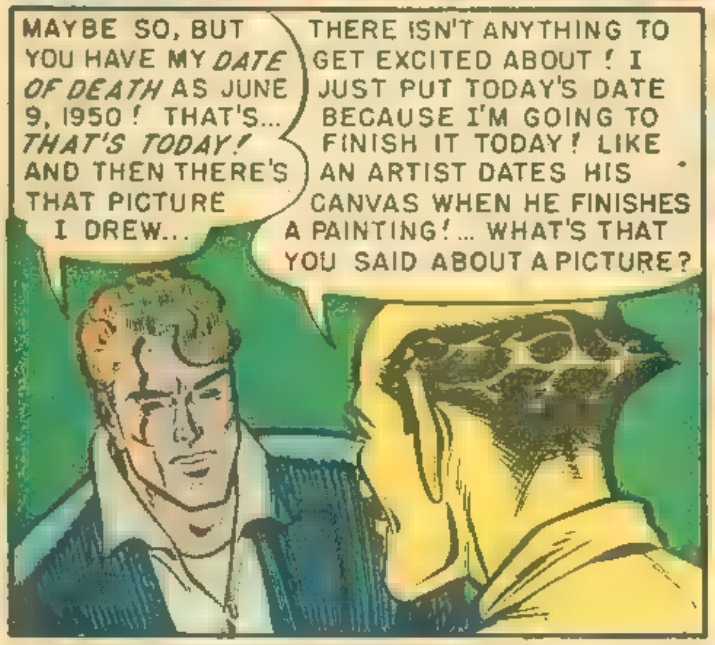

HE'S MAKING SO MUCH NOISE, HE DOESN'T KNOW I'M HERE! WELL, THE MAN KNOWS HIS STUFF... HE'S GOOD! WHAT'S HE WORKING ON NOW?
CLANK

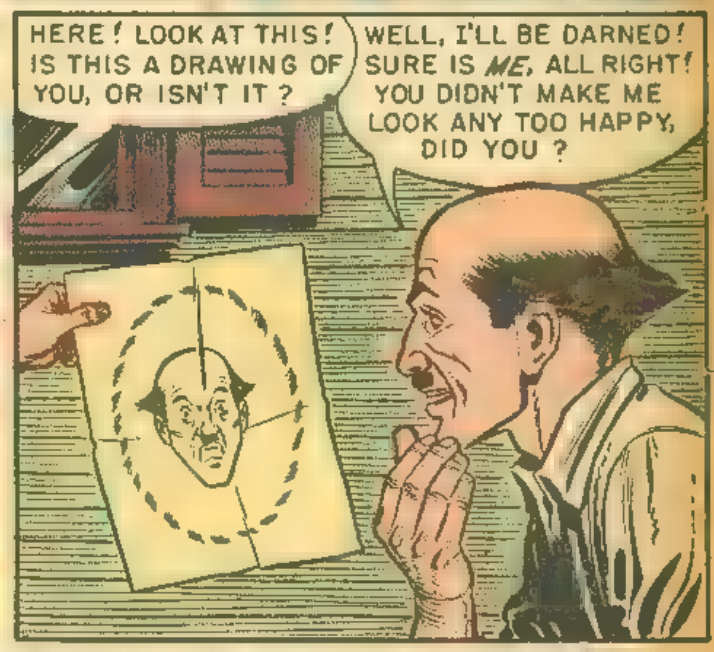

HMM...LET'S SEE! "HERE LIES THEODORE J. WARREN"! ??? WHY, THAT'S *MY* NAME! "BORN APRIL 25, *1922*..." *HOLY SMOKE!* I WANT A CLOSER LOOK AT THAT GRAVESTONE!

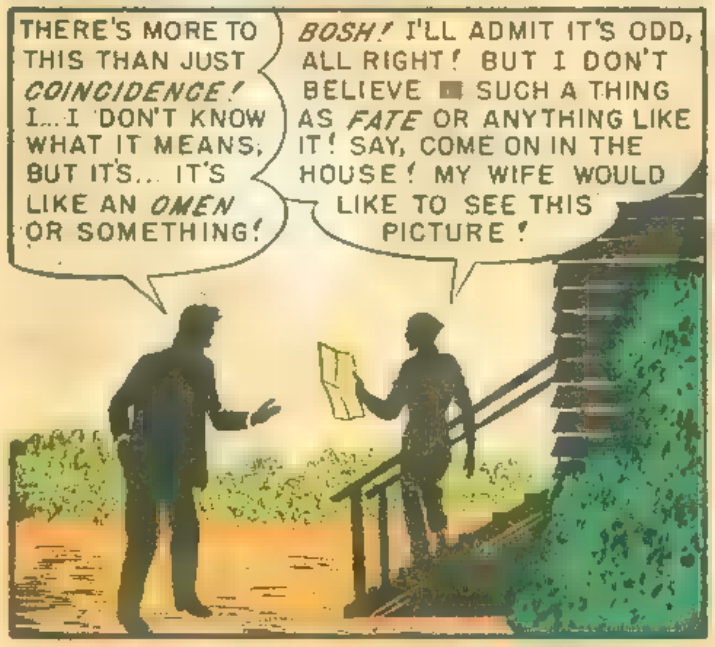

"BORN APRIL 25, 1922 DIED JUNE 9, 1950!"
HEY!
BORN APRIL 25 1922
DIED JUNE 9 1950

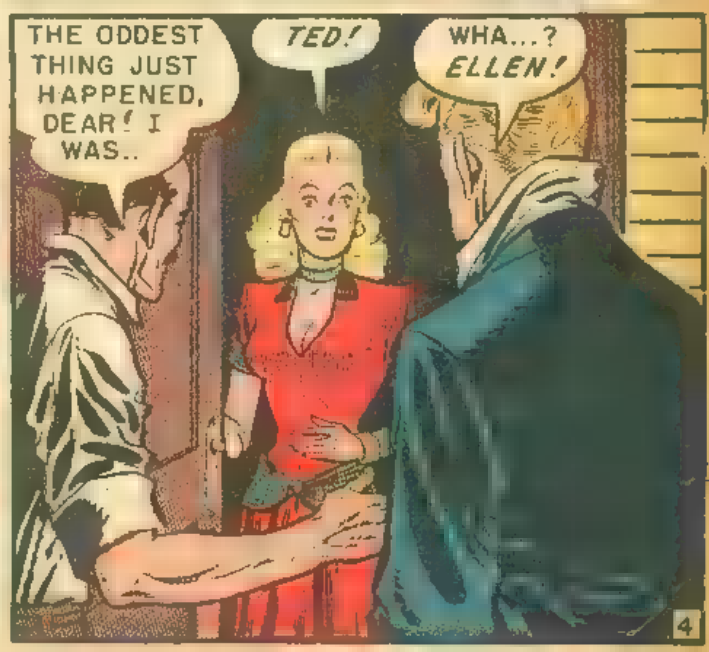

GOOD LORD! THIS IS FANTASTIC! YOUR FACE! YOU ARE THE MAN I DREW! WHAT'S GOING ON? AM I DREAMING?
CALM DOWN, MISTER! TAKE IT EASY! WHAT'S THE MATTER?


THAT HEADSTONE! THAT'S MY NAME AND MY DATE OF BIRTH! WHAT MADE YOU PUT MY NAME AND BIRTH-DATE ON THAT THING?
YOUR NAME? HMM... THAT'S QUITE A COINCIDENCE! BUT DON'T WORRY, MISTER... THIS IS JUST A SAMPLE I'M DOING! YOU KNOW, TO SHOW PEOPLE WHAT KIND OF WORK I DO!

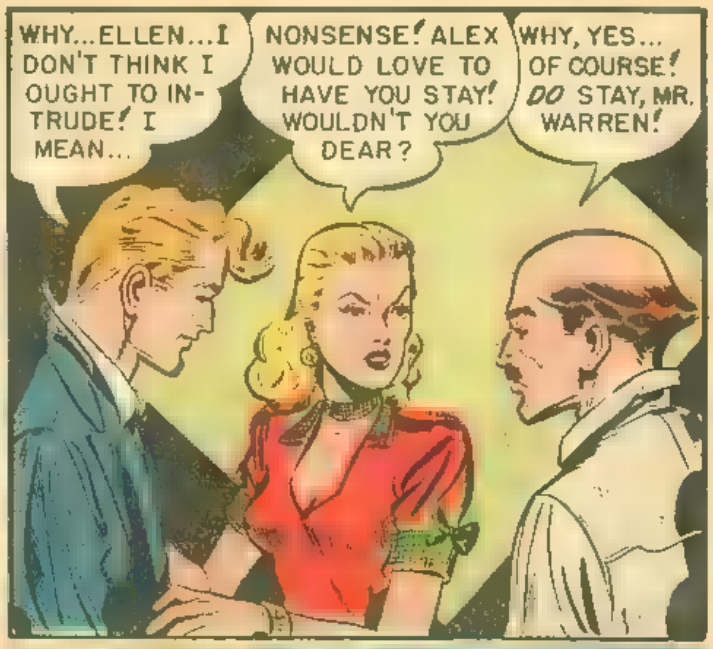

MAYBE SO, BUT YOU HAVE MY DATE OF DEATH AS JUNE 9, 1950! THAT'S... THAT'S TODAY! AND THEN THERE'S THAT PICTURE I DREW...
THERE ISN'T ANYTHING TO GET EXCITED ABOUT! I JUST PUT TODAY'S DATE BECAUSE I'M GOING TO FINISH IT TODAY! LIKE AN ARTIST DATES HIS CANVAS WHEN HE FINISHES A PAINTING!... WHAT'S THAT YOU SAID ABOUT A PICTURE?

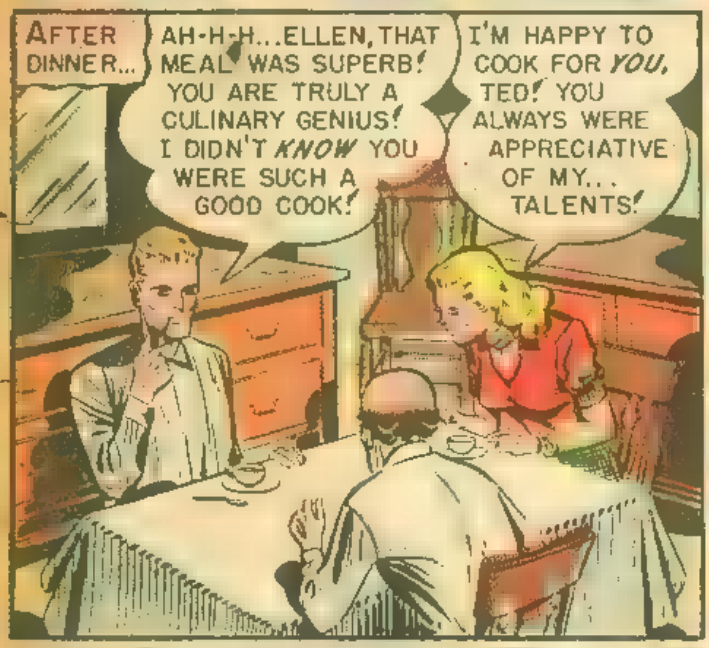

HERE! LOOK AT THIS! IS THIS A DRAWING OF YOU, OR ISN'T IT?
WELL, I'LL BE DARNED! SURE IS ME, ALL RIGHT! YOU DIDN'T MAKE ME LOOK ANY TOO HAPPY, DID YOU?

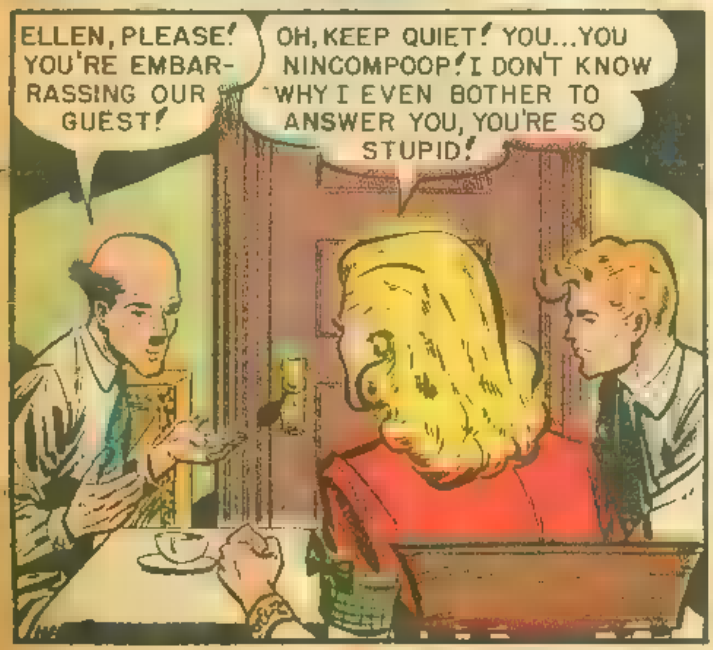

THERE'S MORE TO THIS THAN JUST COINCIDENCE! I...I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT MEANS, BUT IT'S... IT'S LIKE AN OMEN OR SOMETHING!
BOSH! I'LL ADMIT IT'S ODD, ALL RIGHT! BUT I DON'T BELIEVE SUCH A THING AS FATE OR ANYTHING LIKE IT! SAY, COME ON IN THE HOUSE! MY WIFE WOULD LIKE TO SEE THIS PICTURE!


THE ODDEST THING JUST HAPPENED, DEAR! I WAS..
TED!
WHA...? ELLEN!

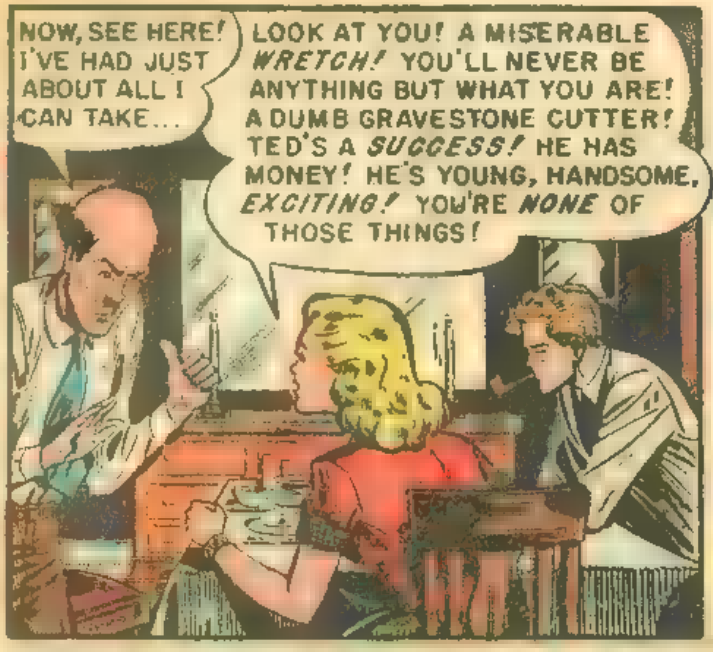
YOU TWO KNOW EACH OTHER?
WHY YES, MR. KORDOVA! YOUR WIFE AND I WERE...ER... GOOD FRIENDS YEARS AGO!
YES...VERY GOOD FRIENDS! IT'S *GRAND* TO SEE YOU AGAIN, TED! YOU MUST STAY FOR DINNER! WE CAN TALK ABOUT ...OLD TIMES!


WHY...ELLEN...I DON'T THINK I OUGHT TO INTRUDE! I MEAN...
NONSENSE! ALEX WOULD LOVE TO HAVE YOU STAY! WOULDN'T YOU DEAR?
WHY, YES... OF COURSE! *DO* STAY, MR. WARREN!

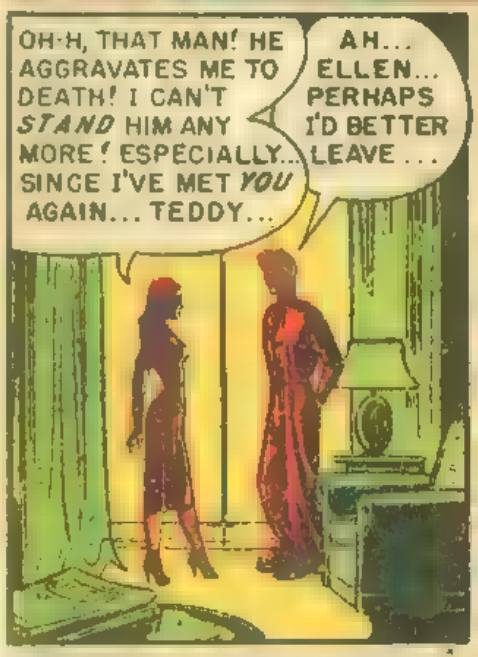

AFTER DINNER...
AH-H-H...ELLEN, THAT MEAL WAS SUPERB! YOU ARE TRULY A CULINARY GENIUS! I DIDN'T *KNOW* YOU WERE SUCH A GOOD COOK!
I'M HAPPY TO COOK FOR *YOU*, TED! YOU ALWAYS WERE APPRECIATIVE OF MY... TALENTS!

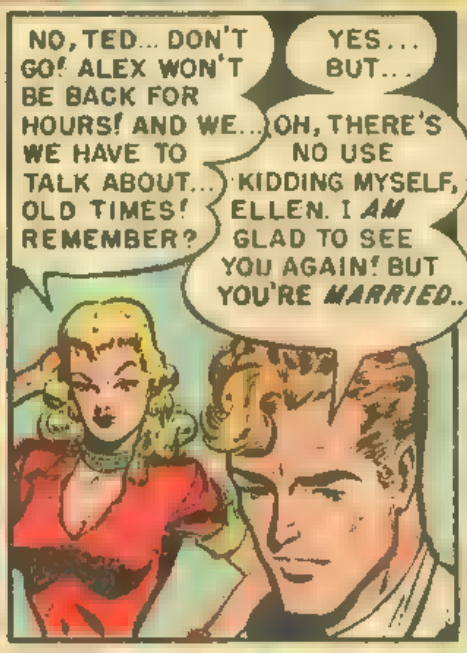

ELLEN, PLEASE! YOU'RE EMBARRASSING OUR GUEST!
OH, KEEP QUIET! YOU...YOU NINCOMPOOP! I DON'T KNOW WHY I EVEN BOTHER TO ANSWER YOU, YOU'RE SO STUPID!

NOW, ELLEN, LET'S NOT ARGUE! WE HAVE COMPANY, REMEMBER!
I SAID, SHUT UP! WHY CAN'T YOU BE NICE LIKE TED, HERE, FOR A CHANGE? HONESTLY, I DON'T KNOW WHAT EVER POSSESSED ME TO MARRY A FOOL LIKE YOU!

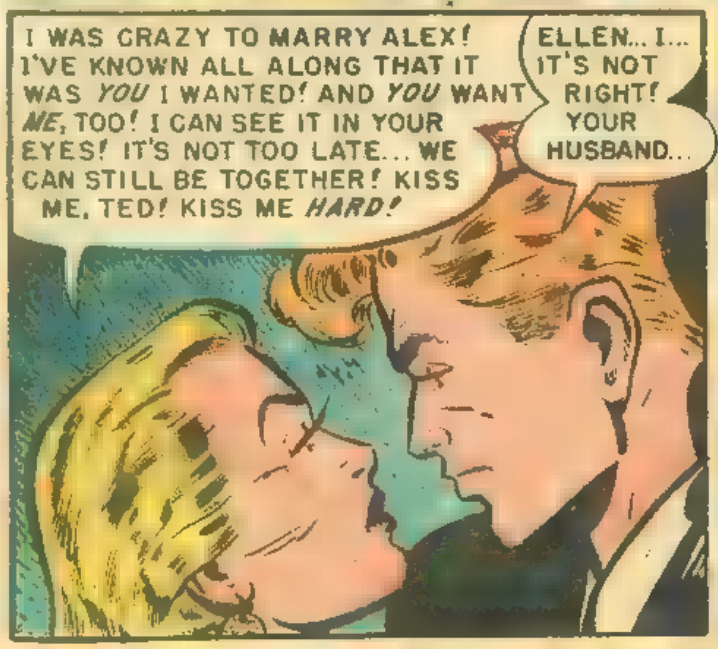

NOW, SEE HERE! I'VE HAD JUST ABOUT ALL I CAN TAKE...
LOOK AT YOU! A MISERABLE *WRETCH!* YOU'LL NEVER BE ANYTHING BUT WHAT YOU ARE! A DUMB GRAVESTONE CUTTER! TED'S A *SUCCESS!* HE HAS MONEY! HE'S YOUNG, HANDSOME, *EXCITING!* YOU'RE *NONE* OF THOSE THINGS!

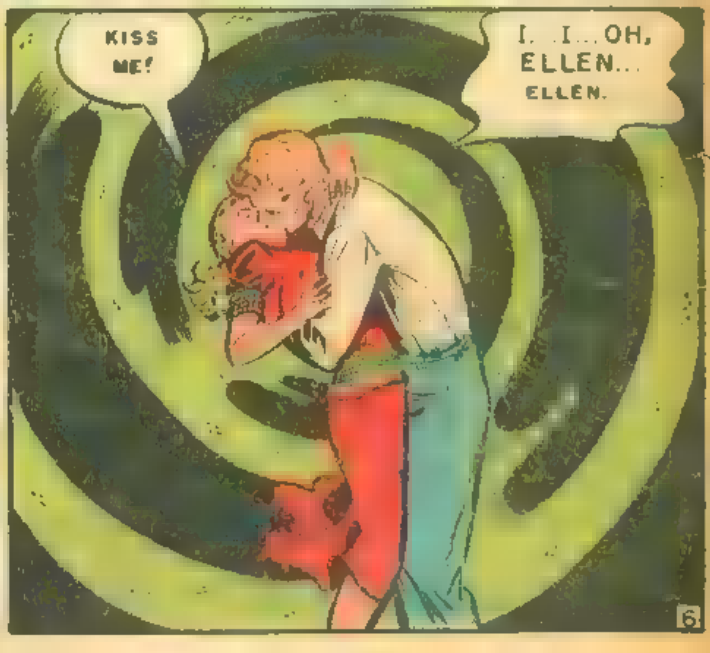
I'VE HAD *ENOUGH!* I'M GOING OUT TO MY WORKSHOP! THERE ARE SOME THINGS I WANT TO DO!
GO AHEAD, RUN, YOU SPINELESS SIMPLETON! FOR ALL I CARE YOU CAN GO OUT AND *NEVER* COME BACK!

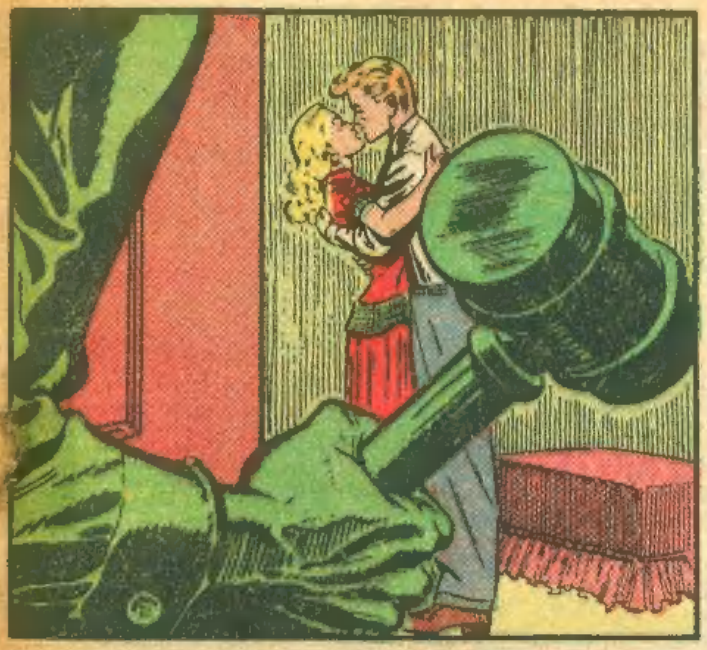

OH-H, THAT MAN! HE AGGRAVATES ME TO DEATH! I CAN'T *STAND* HIM ANY MORE! ESPECIALLY... SINCE I'VE MET *YOU* AGAIN... TEDDY...
AH... ELLEN... PERHAPS I'D BETTER LEAVE...


NO, TED... DON'T GO! ALEX WON'T BE BACK FOR HOURS! AND WE... WE HAVE TO TALK ABOUT... OLD TIMES! REMEMBER?
YES... BUT...
OH, THERE'S NO USE KIDDING MYSELF, ELLEN. I *AM* GLAD TO SEE YOU AGAIN! BUT YOU'RE *MARRIED*..

FORGET ABOUT ALEX, TED! JUST THINK OF *YOU*... AND *ME!* IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME... BUT YOU HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN, HAVE YOU, TED? YOU COULDN'T FORGET *ME!*
NO... NO, I HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN! THOSE NIGHTS... YOUR KISSES...

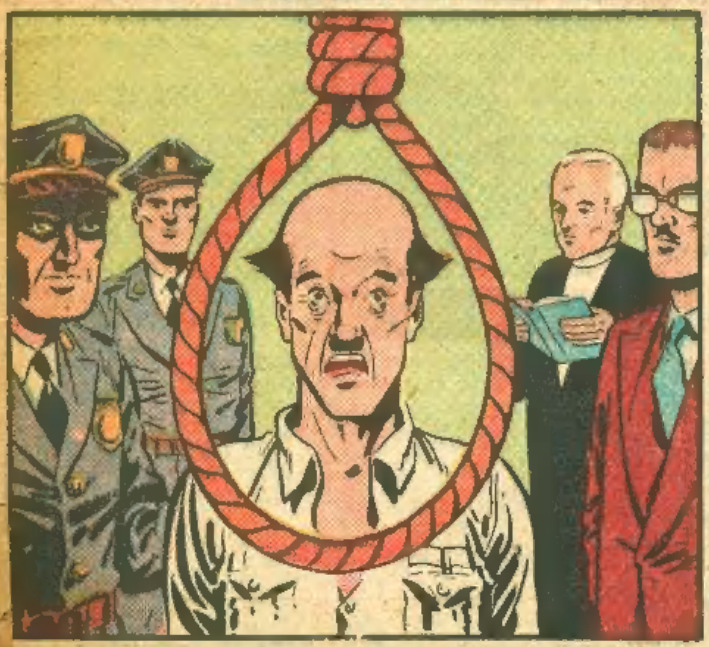

I WAS CRAZY TO MARRY ALEX! I'VE KNOWN ALL ALONG THAT IT WAS *YOU* I WANTED! AND *YOU* WANT *ME*, TOO! I CAN SEE IT IN YOUR EYES! IT'S NOT TOO LATE... WE CAN STILL BE TOGETHER! KISS ME, TED! KISS ME *HARD!*
ELLEN... I... IT'S NOT RIGHT! YOUR HUSBAND...

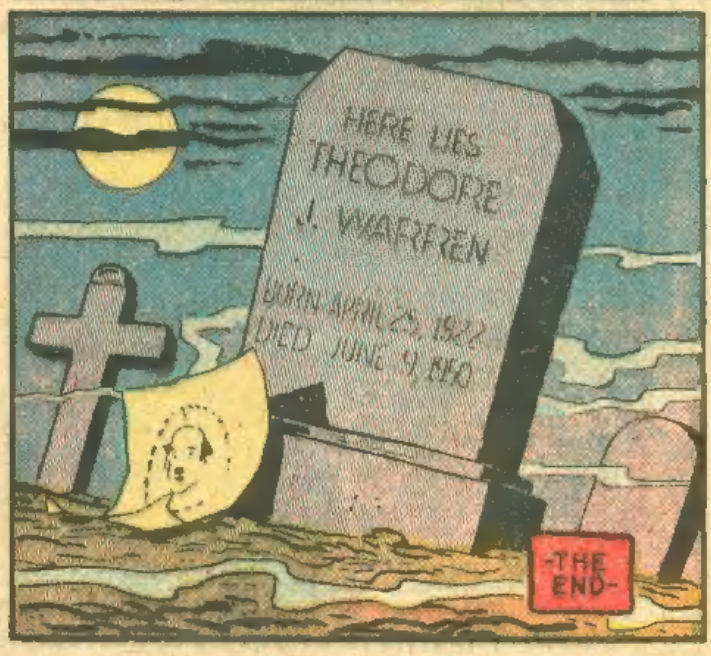

KISS ME!
I... I... OH, ELLEN... ELLEN.



ALEX!

WHAT HAPPENED?
ALEX KORDOVA JUST KILLED SOME GUY. . . CAUGHT HIM WITH MRS. KORDOVA! BEAT HIM TO A PULP!




HERE LIES
THEODORE
J. WARREN
-THE END-

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## WHICH ONE PAID HUNDREDS OF DOLLARS TO TRAIN AT MY SIDE?

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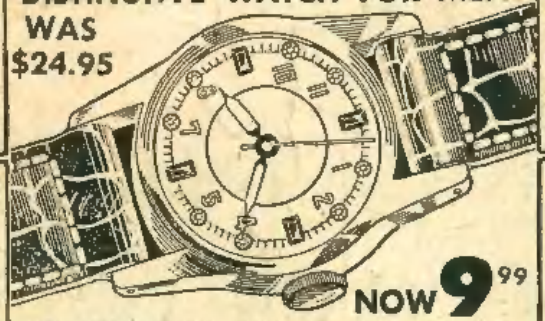

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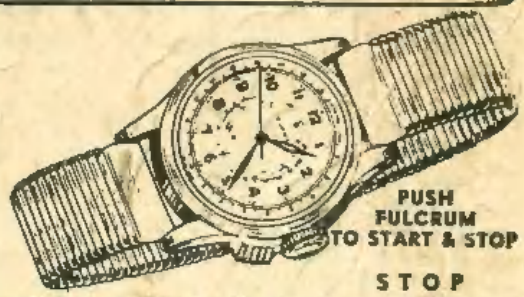

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